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Egypt, Libya discuss peace

SALLUM, Egypt (AFP) — Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak met Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi in Tripoli on Monday for talks on the Middle East peace process and the Lockerbie plane bombing. "The peace process was at the top of the agenda," Egypt's Information Minister Safwat Al Sherif told Egyptian television after the one-on-one meeting between the two leaders. They stressed their commitment to "the principle of land-for-peace as the basis of a just and lasting peace" between Israel and its Arab neighbours. Libya is an outspoken opponent of the peace process with Israel sponsored by the United States. Arab and African issues were also raised, Mr. Sherif said, while Mr. Mubarak told Libyan television that his talks with Colonel Qadhafi covered joint projects between their countries.



Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جورديان تايمز يومية سياسية مستقلة عن المؤسسة الصحفية الأردنية «الراي»



EAU opens up top U.N. post

UNITED NATIONS (AFP) — The Organisation of African Unity (OAU) chairman has written to African leaders proposing that they directly contact the U.N. Security Council with candidates for the post of U.N. chief. In the letter, a copy of which was obtained by AFP on Monday, Cameroon President Paul Biya, the current OAU chairman, also suggested that the name of U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali should remain on any list. He acted after consulting with other African leaders on how to break a deadlock following a U.S. veto of Mr. Ghali's reelection on Nov. 19. Until now, the OAU has officially backed the 74-year-old Egyptian. "It is time, in order to retain Africa's chances of a second five-year mandate (as U.N. chief) that African states which so desire present other candidacies of quality, at the same time as that of Dr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali," said Mr. Biya.

House rejects Ammarin resignation

Kabariti apologises to Karak deputy in move described as 'noble and courageous' by fellow parliamentarians

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The Lower House of Parliament on Monday voted down the resignation of Karak Deputy Nazih Ammarin after a lengthy and heated debate.

The House's discussion of the resignation, which Dr. Ammarin submitted in protest of the government's handling of the unrest in Karak in August, started peacefully with Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti offering his apologies to the deputy. But tension flared when Dr. Ammarin insisted on reading out a statement.

In an emotional and moving speech, Mr. Kabariti asked Dr. Ammarin to withdraw his resignation, reminding him of the important task ahead of deputies and the need to work for the nation's highest interests.

Dr. Ammarin submitted his resignation to the House following the riots in the south that erupted after the government's decision to change the mode of subsidy for bread. Dr. Ammarin cited at the time verbal threats from Mr. Kabariti as the reason behind his resignation, insisting that his resignation was not personal.

"If what happened was a mistake, the resignation is a bigger mistake," Mr. Kabariti said. "From my



Deputies on Monday try to convince Karak Representative Nazih Ammarin (centre) to drop his insistence on reading out a statement as a condition for withdrawing his resignation from the Lower House (photo by Yusef Allan)

position as a prime minister I address my speech to colleague Ammarin and tell him it will be an honourable stand if he withdraws his resignation. Let the interest of our nation guide us."

"Accepting apologies make you grow bigger in the eyes of all deputies and all those who elected you," Mr. Kabariti said.

Deputies, both centrist and opposition, described the statement by Mr. Kabariti as "courageous and noble."

"I ask Dr. Ammarin to stand up courageously as the prime minister did and say he withdraws his resignation," centrist Deputy Abdul Raouf Rawabdeh said.

When House Speaker Sa'd Hayel Srour gave the floor to Dr. Ammarin, the deputy praised the prime minister, but insisted on reading out a statement that explained the reasons for his resignation.

Deputies Toujan Faisal, Trad Qadi and Samir Habashneh approached Dr. Ammarin and tried to talk him out of reading the statement.

But Dr. Ammarin insisted on reading the statement and threatened not to withdraw his resignation.

Speaker Srour intervened and demanded that the row between the prime minister and Dr. Ammarin be settled once and for all.

Karak Deputy Ahmad Kasasbeh, who said he was

opposed any Israeli move to create new facts on the ground or alter the status of the occupied territories.

"We are anxious to ensure that Israel and the Palestinians reach an agreement over Israeli redeployment in (the West Bank town of) Hebron and move swiftly to other provisions in the Oslo B agreement ahead of resuming the final status talks," said Dr. Muasher.

He reiterated Jordan's demand that Israel remain committed to every agreement it has signed with the Arabs, particularly the Palestinians.

Mr. Netanyahu's refusal to exchange land for peace with the Arabs and his bid

Opposition calls for cancellation of Israeli trade fair

By Sa'eda Kilani
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Opposition deputies in the Lower House of Parliament protested on Monday against the holding of an Israeli exhibition and called on the government to cancel it.

Speaking on behalf of leftist and Islamist opposition members of Parliament, Islamic Action Front (IAF) Deputy Hamam Sa'eed contended that Amman's hosting of the exhibition this month endangered Jordanian industries and asked the deputies to adopt a "historical" stand by denouncing it.

At least 120 Israeli companies are expected to participate in a Dec. 15-18 exhibition in Marj Al Hamam. It will be the first fair of its kind.

"Jordanian entrepreneurs have expressed their rejection of the exhibition. Tragedies in Palestine did not stop, Jordan's water was not returned to it and the Zionist entity is still preparing for more actions against Jordan and the Arabs," Dr. Sa'eed said. "I call on all our colleagues not to normalise relations with the enemy."

Amman Chamber of Industry advisor Ali Dajani told the Jordan Times that the chamber considered the Israeli trade fair as offending and insulting to the public especially in view of "the Israeli practices against the Palestinian people and delays of the implementation of peace accords."

He said though the chamber does not oppose the holding of the exhibition in principle since the Jordan-Israel peace treaty allows Israel and Jordan to organise trade fairs, the timing was "not good." The fair will be boycotted by the Jordanian public and most of the political groups and Jordanian business communities will boycott the fair," he said.

"In the past 10 months, Jordan was supposed to export JD100 million worth of products to the self-rule areas according to the Jordanian-Palestinian agreements. But it could only manage to export JD4.2

King, in cable to Qadhafi, reiterates rejection of sanctions against Libya

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein has sent a cable to Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi reaffirming Jordan's stand in support for the lifting of sanctions imposed on Libya. The cable was in reply to a message which Colonel Qadhafi had sent the King expressing appreciation of the Jordanian stand vis-a-vis this issue.

"I have received your cable with deep appreciation of your stand and I would like to reiterate to you and the people of Libya that Jordan is committed to its clear principled stand in support of efforts to end the sufferings of the Libyan people in all their forms because we are convinced that the accusations levelled against Libya, which gave cause to the embargo on

the country, are unjust," said King Hussein.

"As Jordan strives to bolster brotherly ties among Arab countries, it is a task which the Kingdom is keen to uphold and strive to achieve," he added.

Col. Qadhafi's cable to the King had expressed appreciation of the Jordanian stand as voiced by Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti on the embargo imposed on Libya.

Mr. Kabariti said during a press conference he held with his Spanish counterpart Jose Maria Anzar in Madrid last Monday that the U.N. sanctions imposed on Libya to pressure Tripoli into surrendering two Libyans suspected of involvement in the 1988 Pan Am bombing over Lockerbie in Scotland had

not solved anything and that the sanctions in general tended to add to the suffering of the people rather than pressuring the regime.

"It is very much needed for the international community to revise and consider the idea of sanctions and see whether they really change the situation in the way that they are intended," he said.

In his cable to the King, Col. Qadhafi said he had studied Mr. Kabariti's call on the U.N. to review the sanctions against Libya and said that this stand left very good impression with the Libyan people.

"We would like to thank you for this stand and look forward towards bolstering Jordanian-Libyan brotherly ties," he added.

Crown Prince heads for talks in Europe on Jordan, Mideast security cooperation

AMMAN (Petra) — His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan left for Amsterdam on Monday at the start of a European tour, which will take him also to the United Kingdom, for talks with officials in the two countries on bilateral ties and Jordan's views concerning political, economic and regional security issues.

Prince Hassan will take part in an international conference on global changes which will open in the Hague on Tuesday and in a specialised working session tackling the general situation in Jordan and the country's economic, political and social life.

The meeting, which will be attended by Jordanian businessmen and European

counterparts, is also expected to focus attention on areas open to foreign investments in Jordan, the transfer of technology to the agricultural, tourist and infrastructure sectors in the Kingdom.

In Britain, the Crown Prince will be guest of honour at a meeting on settling international disputes and will review with European leaders the prospects of launching a regional security cooperation system in the Middle East.

Prince Hassan is also scheduled to deliver a lecture in London on Jordan's strategic location and its role in the Middle East.

The Crown Prince, who is accompanied by Minister of Water Samir Kawa, Minister of Planning Rima

Khalaf, Central Bank Governor Ziyad Fariz and Secretary General of the Higher Council for Science and Technology Hani Mulki, was seen off at the airport by His Royal Highness Prince Mohammed, Chief Chamberlain Prince Ra'd Ben Zeid and Prince Ali Ben Nayef, His Majesty King Hussein's private secretary, and the King's secretary on cultural affairs His Royal Highness Prince Ghazi Ben Mohammad as well as Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti and senior government officials and charge d'affaires at the British embassy in Amman.

Before the Crown Prince's departure Prince Mohammed was sworn in as Regent in the presence of the Council of Ministers.

Qouriea restates Palestinian position after talks in Amman

AMMAN (J.T.) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti on Monday held talks with Palestinian Legislative Council Speaker Ahmad Qouriea, who said after the meeting that there will be no renegotiation of the accord on the long-delayed Israeli troop withdrawal from the West Bank town of Hebron.

"The Palestinian position will stay the same. That consists of demanding the implementation of the accord that we reached," told Jordan Television.

Israeli troops, under an accord negotiated by the Labour government, were scheduled to have pulled out of most of Hebron in March, but the implementation has been stalled since right-wing Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu took power in June.

"(Israel) should say now if it wants the accord concluded and in that case, undertake to implement it, or say that it doesn't want it and then we'll see if it's necessary to begin new negotiations or choose other options," said Mr. Qouriea, a key Palestinian negotiator of the autonomy accords.

"By agreeing to open negotiations with Israel over the implementation of the agreements we wanted to prove to the Israeli public and to the world at large

Jordan criticises Netanyahu comments on Jordan Valley

Area part of occupied land, should be returned to Palestinians — Muasher

Chirac warns Israel against colonisation; Levy blames Egypt for criticism against his country

By P.Vivekanand with agency dispatches

AMMAN — Jordan on Monday assailed an assertion by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that the Jordan Valley, in the West Bank, would remain part of the Jewish state, and said the area was part of the occupied territory that should be returned to the Palestinians.

The criticism, voiced by Information Minister Marwan Muasher, came one day after His Majesty King Hussein expressed deep concern over the fate of the Middle East peace process under the policies of hardliner Netanyahu and Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti implicitly accused

the Israeli premier of double talk.

French President Jacques Chirac was meanwhile reported as warning Mr. Netanyahu of a flare-up in violence in the region as a result of his policies, and calling for a "gesture" on the part of Israel to change the situation.

The Israeli prime minister told Jewish settlers in the Jordan Valley on Sunday that the area would be "an integral part of Israel whatever the definitive solution with the Palestinians."

Dr. Muasher, addressing a press briefing on Monday, said the Jordanian position was "clear that all the occupied territories must return to Palestinian sovereignty" and that the Kingdom

opposed any Israeli move to create new facts on the ground or alter the status of the occupied territories.

"We are anxious to ensure that Israel and the Palestinians reach an agreement over Israeli redeployment in (the West Bank town of) Hebron and move swiftly to other provisions in the Oslo B agreement ahead of resuming the final status talks," said Dr. Muasher.

He reiterated Jordan's demand that Israel remain committed to every agreement it has signed with the Arabs, particularly the Palestinians.

Mr. Netanyahu's refusal to exchange land for peace with the Arabs and his bid

while not openly criticising the Russian comments, stressed that NATO expansion would go ahead, saying it posed no threat to Moscow.

"NATO has been and remains a defensive alliance of like-minded democratic states," Mr. Gore told the meeting.

NATO expansion is not officially on the agenda of the OSCE, whose leaders gather every two years to agree their broad political direction.

Iraq expects to start export of oil 'in the next few days'

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq said Monday it will start exporting oil "in the next few days" for the first time in six years under a U.N. oil-for-food deal.

Foreign Minister Mohammad Al Sahaf said the government has concluded contracts with international oil firms and drawn up dozens of other contracts for importing food, medicine and other humanitarian goods, while international oil experts would start arriving Monday to monitor the exports.

"An international expert, who will check facilities for evaluating the quality of the crude which Iraq will export, is expected in Baghdad on Monday," the minister told the official press.

But a U.N. source said his arrival was not expected until Wednesday.

Mr. Sahaf said exports were expected to start "in the next few days."

Under the accord signed with the United Nations in May, Iraq can export \$2 billion of oil every six months to buy food and medicine for its sanctions-hit people but also to defray U.N. costs and pay for war reparations stemming from the invasion of Kuwait.

Last week Iraq agreed to U.N. terms for monitoring the deal and received U.N. approval for setting prices for its oil exports, the last political hurdle to implementing the deal.

However, U.N. Secretary General Boutros Ghali still has to give the green light for the exports.

Iraq's former Oil Minister Osama Al Hiti indicated last week that the end of December was a more realistic target for oil exports to begin, while Iraq's state marketing organisation has said the first deliveries would be made in the second half of December.

The United Nations plans to strictly supervise implementation of the deal and will deploy 14 experts to monitor the estimated 600,000 barrels of oil Iraq will be allowed to export daily.

The 10 experts tasked with examining operations in Iraq will begin their mission on Thursday, two days after they arrive in the country, the official Iraqi News Agency said.

But a U.N. official said "we have no information on the exact dates of the arrival of these experts."

Besides the oil experts, the United Nations plans to deploy 151 observers to watch food distribution, plus eight at U.N. headquarters in New York, and 32 customs agents to monitor shipments arriving at Iraqi ports and border posts.

Three members of Lloyd's of London, which is tasked with monitoring imports, arrived here last week to start checking customs posts, while the Dutch firm Saybolt will supervise oil exports, diplomats said.

Relief officials in Baghdad said it would probably take three months before food bought by the proceeds from the oil sales

reached needy Iraqis.

"For that period we urgently need food and medicine. Our stocks for centre and south are running low...we only have 14 per cent of immediate emergency food needs," Viktor Wahlroos, deputy U.N. coordinator for Iraq, told Reuters.

The United Nations launched an appeal in September for millions of dollars to meet the urgent needs of more than two million destitute and internally displaced Iraqis.

Holbrook Arthur, director of the World Food Programme in Iraq, said he could meet the needs of about 90 per cent of more than half a million needy Kurds in northern Iraq through the winter months.

"The number of those in urgent need of food in centre and south is 1.4 million people and for them we have 14 per cent of supplies available," he said.

The value of the Iraqi dinar has risen sharply and the prices of essential commodities plunged in the past week.

On Monday the dinar soared again, to 725 to the dollar from 900 at the weekend. The greenback was worth about 1,650 dinars before Iraq's acceptance of the U.N. conditions.

Iraq's official media provide daily coverage of oil news and on Monday made it look as if oil sales could start any time.

Russia, Belarus bring discord to OSCE

LISBON (Agencies) — Russia attacked the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) plans for enlargement and Belarus came under fire at the start of a security summit on Monday, sounding a jarring note as some 50 nations met to try and build lasting peace in Europe.

The U.S.-Russia rift over NATO expansion clouded the summit as it sought to agree plans for a new security architecture for the 21st century.

Russian Premier Viktor Chernomyrdin and U.S.

Vice-President Al Gore clashed as the 54-member Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) took the latest step in adapting Europe for the post-cold-war era.

The summit was also marked by condemnation of Belarus President Alexander Lukashenko over a disputed referendum.

On NATO expansion, Mr. Chernomyrdin lamented that it could only create new lines of division in Europe.

"We have clearly stated our opposition to the expansion

of the alliance and its military infrastructures," he said.

President Boris Yeltsin went further: "Europe is on the threshold of crucial decisions," he said, referring to dilemma between "a united and prosperous Europe without dividing lines or an unpredictable cold peace."

"We cannot allow a new division of Europe," he added in a letter to the assembled heads of state and government delivered by Mr. Chernomyrdin.

But Mr. Gore and others,

while not openly criticising the Russian comments, stressed that NATO expansion would go ahead, saying it posed no threat to Moscow.

"NATO has been and remains a defensive alliance of like-minded democratic states," Mr. Gore told the meeting.

NATO expansion is not officially on the agenda of the OSCE, whose leaders gather every two years to agree their broad political direction.

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Bahrain detains 2 Qataris on spying charges in flaring row

MANAMA (Agencies) — Bahrain on Monday announced the arrests of two Qataris on spying charges as a dispute between the two neighbours intensified ahead of a Gulf Arab summit in Doha which Manama has vowed to boycott.

The pair, a man and a woman both of Qatari nationality, confessed before a judge to gathering information undermining Bahrain's security and passing it on to the Qatari intelligence services, the official Gulf News Agency (GNA) said.

The two were arrested by the security services who have turned the case over to the courts in preparation for a trial, the news agency said.

The woman was identified as Salwa Jassim Muhammad Fakhr, 33, who, GNA said, had confessed to receiving sums of money from the Qatari intelligence service for her work.

The man was identified as Fahd Hamad Abdullah Al Bakker, a 28-year-old officer in the Qatari intelligence service.

The security forces in Bahrain also arrested a number of people for spying for Qatar in January 1987.

Al Akbar Al Khaleej

newspaper, which reflects the government view, said Manama now "had no other choice but to boycott" the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) summit hosted by Doha on Dec. 7-9.

The arrest of the spies "is a precedent which alone is enough to destroy the GCC," it added.

Bahrain had previously vowed to boycott the summit because it says Qatar has failed to show good faith in resolving their dispute over competing claims to the Hawar islands and sandbanks in the area.

The Gulf Daily News, which also reflects the official view, said it had been open to mediation efforts to resolve the dispute, but Qatar had now "surpassed all limits" and Bahrain could not attend the summit.

"Doha has revealed itself to be a wolf in sheep's clothing at the very time it prepares to host this year's GCC summit," it said.

"In the GCC's entire history and even before that, no Gulf country ever lowered itself to the pathetic level you have now reached," the English-language newspaper's editorial said.

"All is now unmasked after yesterday's hearing and Doha has been revealed as a sad mixture of inferior-

ity complex and false grandeur," it said.

"This confirms Bahrain's conviction and belief that it should not attend the summit in Doha," it said, adding it did not know how the GCC will be able to continue in such a climate of suspicion and uncertainties.

In Doha on Sunday, the Emir of Qatar, Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al Thani, offered to go to Bahrain in a bid to persuade the country not to boycott the summit.

Bahrain is accusing Qatar of having taken advantage of the GCC summit in December 1990 in Doha to force it to sign a memorandum of understanding calling on it to take their dispute to the International Court of Justice (ICJ). Manama insists an Arab solution should be found to the dispute.

However, Sheikh Hamad said in the interview, which was shown on the Qatari satellite television station Al Jazeera, that the matter should still be solved by the ICJ.

"Qatar will not withdraw the issue of the conflict with Bahrain from the ICJ before the mediation by Saudi Arabia shows some progress," he said.



'FREE THE PRISONERS': Palestinian women holds up pictures of their husbands and relatives as they shout anti-Israeli slogans during a march on Monday calling for Israel to free its Palestinian prisoners. Some 200 Palestinian women took part in the peaceful demonstration in the Gaza Strip. Human rights groups say some 5,000 Palestinians are still in Israeli jails and their release is one of the demands of the Palestinian National Authority in its negotiations with Israel (Reuters photo)

More cases of corruption, bribery and violation of rules sent to court

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — A special committee in charge of investigating corruption has sent 25 more cases involving 21 people to prosecutors, raising to nearly 130 cases referred to trial since the Kabarti government took office in February, Information Minister Marwan Muasher said Monday.

The 25 cases are in addition to dozens of violations of Ministry of Supply and health regulations, involving 107 people who were fined or faced a court trial, the information minister told a weekly press briefing.

The new cases referred to prosecutors involve forgery of documents and violation of tender regulations at the Greater Amman Municipality, pilferage, sale of Ministry of Health medicines, smuggling of steroid pills and small-size arms, bribery at the telecommunications company.

One of the cases, unveiled by the minister, involved four employees of Royal Jordanian (RJ) baggage department. According to the minister, the four, operating out of the Queen Alia International Airport, were found to be falsifying documents claiming lost baggage and collecting damages.

A major case of smuggling was that of 25 truck jacks each costing JD 1,500.

While it is indeed a case of smuggling, it could involve bribery as the sheer size of the jacks makes the

smuggling of such items into the country without detection almost impossible, said Dr. Muasher.

Dr. Muasher's disclosures on Monday, drawn from a monthly report submitted by the special committee, came in line with a government promise to prove its resolution in endeavours to fight corruption and bribery.

The government of Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabarti appointed the special committee in June.

By the end of October, the committee had sent about 100 cases to prosecutors. The majority of related trials have already started while others are being processed for formal presentation to the courts.

Cases unveiled so far involved manipulations with tenders for spare parts, purchased by the Greater Amman Municipal Council, tax evasion, and tampering with standards and specifications.

Others involved direct bribery for services rendered by the Telecommunications Corporation and the Civil Status Department, forgery of government documents, adulteration of foodstuffs, changing labels after the expiry of product shelf-life with the intention of further sales, marketing locally produced automobile oil as imported, smuggling of computers, mobile phones and telephone equipment and undercutting the Telecommunications Corporation by illegally offering telephone services at lower rates and thus depriving the corporation of revenues.

Misuse of government coupons for milk powder and removal of goods from the free zones without paying customs duties have also been reported; so were the sale of imitation products, mainly watches, bearing international brand names, adulteration of food for human consumption as well as fodder, forgery of work permits for foreign labourers and ignoring violations of Ministry of Labour regulations.

In many cases, all foodstuffs and other goods and equipment were confiscated. The government considers bribery and misuse of government office for personal gains as well as violating laws related to public health and welfare and government revenues as part of the fight against corruption although some of the cases could not be classified as corruption in a strict sense.

The special committee also uncovered cases of smuggling mobile telephones, satellite receivers and electronic goods as well as other items from Iraq, evading the customs authorities.

Investigators found in August that the Ministry of Supply had purchased Egyptian rice at \$510 per tonne whereas American rice of the same specifications and quality was available at \$460 per tonne, therefore implicating the person(s) involved as personally benefiting by accepting the higher offer.

Judicial confidence pending the formal launch of legal proceedings in court warrants that the suspects involved in any of the cases not be identified by name.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Arab League chief to visit Spain

CAIRO (AFP) — Arab League Secretary General Esmat Abdul Meguid is to visit Spain on Tuesday for talks with Spanish officials on European efforts to push forward the Middle East peace process, league officials said on Monday. Mr. Abdul Meguid will meet King Juan Carlos and Spanish Foreign Minister Abel Matutes, they said. In addition to talks on the peace process launched in Madrid in 1991, Abdul Meguid and Spanish officials will also discuss ways of boosting Arab-European cooperation, they added.

Saudi ambassador dismisses rumours

LONDON (AFP) — Saudi Ambassador to London Ghazi Al Gosaibi on Monday dismissed as "fiction" a British press report that King Fahd was to replace him in a bid to improve ties with the British government. "I am flattered by the attention, amused by the fiction and upset that my name was misspelled," Mr. Gosaibi said in a single-sentence statement responding to the report in the Sunday Business newspaper, which quoted foreign office sources. The paper had said Mr. Gosaibi's reported departure would be aimed at reassuring London on the future of the Al Yamamah contract under which the two countries are to exchange oil for arms worth \$3 billion a year. In statements to the BBC last April the ambassador had said the continued presence in Britain of Saudi dissident Mohammad Al Masari jeopardised London's economic and trade relations with Riyadh, including Al Yamamah. London then tried to expel the dissident, but was thwarted by the courts, and his residence permit was extended for four years — but without political asylum — at the risk of angering Riyadh.

Quake jolts Cyprus but causes no damage

NICOSIA (AFP) — An earthquake registering 5.1 degrees on the Richter scale jolted the island of Cyprus on Monday but did not cause any damage or casualties, the geological survey department said. The epicenter of the quake was located under the seabed some 50 kilometres southwest of the coastal town of Paphos, it said. Several dozen people were slightly injured in Cyprus and one killed in Cairo in an Oct. 9 quake measuring 6.5 degrees on the Richter scale.

Cairo court sentences 5 militants to death

CAIRO (AP) — A state security judge on Monday sentenced five militants to death but stayed the penalty until he gets approval from a senior religious leader.

Judge Ahmed Salaheddin Badour of the supreme state security emergency court postponed announcing verdicts and sentences for 27 other defendants in the case until Jan. 6. Eight of the defendants are at large, including two who were sentenced to death.

Under Egyptian law, which is largely based on Islamic legal codes, courts can sentence defendants to death but then must submit the cases for approval by the office of the mufti, a senior state-appointed religious leader. It is almost always granted.

The prosecution had demanded the death penalty for 15 of the 32 defendants, accused in the killings of eight police officers and two civilians in 1993 in the province of Assiut, 320 kilometres south of Cairo.

They are also accused of possessing firearms and explosives and of membership in Al Gamaa Al Islamiyah, or the Islamic Group, Egypt's biggest militant group.

The other defendants face penalties of up to life at

hard labour. If the defendants at large are arrested, they must be retried.

The defendants entered innocent pleas when their trial started May 7.

Militants have waged a campaign of violence since the spring of 1992 to try to overthrow Egypt's secular government and replace it with strict Islamic rule. More than 1,000 people have died in the conflict.

In the latest attack, militants shot and killed a policeman and wounded three others in an attack on their police car in southern Egypt, the interior ministry said Monday.

The Sunday night shooting took place between the villages of Safay and Atidum in Minya, 220 kilometres south of Cairo. There were no arrests.

The policemen were returning to their homes at the end of their shift when gunmen hiding in fields opened fire on their car. Officer Nagi Habib Hanna died immediately, and the three others were hospitalised for their wounds.

The attack is similar to others by militants seeking to overthrow the government. The militants target police officers, members of the Coptic Christian minority like Hanna and sometimes tourists.

KDP reports sporadic fighting with PUK south of 'capital' Erbil

ANKARA (AFP) — The Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) on Monday reported sporadic fighting with a rival Iraqi Kurdish group despite a five-week-old ceasefire in northern Iraq. Turkey's Anatolia news agency said.

Anatolia quoted KDP radio in northern Iraq as saying that fighters from the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK) had recently attacked KDP positions near Mount Didevan, south of the Kurdistan "capital" of Erbil.

The radio said KDP forces had successfully defended their positions and the PUK had to retreat. There were no casualty figures or other details. The report could not be independently confirmed.

It was the first fighting reported in the region since the KDP and PUK agreed to a U.S.-mediated ceasefire in late October.

On Sunday, however, Anatolia quoted PUK radio as saying that KDP forces had recently executed nine PUK members in northern Iraq.

PUK radio said KDP

fighters had stopped a vehicle, dragged out eight PUK members and shot them dead. According to the radio, the KDP also executed another PUK member arrested earlier in Erbil.

Fighting raged in northern Iraq in late August as the KDP of Massud Barzani, backed by Iraqi troops, attacked the PUK of Jalal Talabani, capturing Erbil.

Under heavy U.S. pressure to stop the fighting, the two sides agreed to a ceasefire on Oct. 23.

In two rounds of U.S.-mediated peace talks in Ankara since then, the KDP and the PUK pledged to abide by the truce and a joint team has already started work on drawing a line of demarcation between the two sides.

The two Kurdish groups have controlled northern Iraq in defiance of Baghdad since the end of the 1991 Gulf war. But fighting broke out between them in May 1994 over power-sharing and tax revenue. Over 2,500 people have been killed in violence since then.

PNA releases Hamas leader

GAZA CITY (AFP) — The Palestinian National Authority (PNA) has released a leading figure in the Islamic resistance movement Hamas arrested in March after a series of anti-Israeli bombings, a source close to Hamas said Monday.

Ahmad Nimr was freed from prison in the Gaza Strip on Sunday after members of the National Islamic Welfare Party (Khalas) asked Palestinian intelligence head Amin Al Hindi for his release, an official from the Khalas party told AFP.

"Hindi promised to release Nimr, and he also promised to release any prisoners against whom accusations have not been proven," said the Khalas official, who asked not to be named.

Mr. Nimr was arrested in a crackdown against militants following a series of anti-Israeli suicide bombings led by Hamas and Islamic Jihad which left 58 people dead along with the bombers.

Israel accused the PNA last month of easing off the crackdown after Palestinian police began releasing many of those arrested in the campaign.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:05Budgie The Little
Helicopter
14:25Oscar's Orchestra
14:40Comedy — I Love Lucy
15:00Sciences Cartoon
15:15Magazine — Montage
16:00At The Zoo
16:30Dog House
17:00News Flash
17:01Fun With Physics
17:15Road To Avonlea
18:00 Serie — La Lumiere des
Justes
19:00Lc Journal
19:15 Magazine — Extra Large
19:30News Headlines
19:35Murphy Brown
20:00Magazine — Zero One
20:30Encounter
21:10Star Trek — The Next
Generation
22:00News in English
22:25China Beach
23:15Mission Impossible
23:59Are You Being Served?
PRAYER TIMES
04:52Fajr
06:14Sunrise Duha
11:25Dhuhr
14:14Asr
16:36Maghreb
17:57Isha
CHURCHES
St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Swefieh, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church
Tel. 632785.

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590

Church of the Annunciation
Tel. 637440.

De la Salle Church Tel.
661757.

Terra Sancta Church Tel.
622366

Anglican Church Tel. 652826.

Armenian Catholic Church
Tel. 771331.

Armenian Orthodox Church
Tel. 775261.

St. Ephraim Church Tel.
771751.

Amman International Church
Tel. 652526

Evangelical Lutheran Church
Tel. 824328.

German-speaking Evangelical
Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel.
654932.

Church of Nazarene Tel.
675691.

The Evangelical Local Church
in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking
Latin Catholics Parish Tel.
614190.

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department
of Meteorology:
A warm air mass is expected to
affect the Kingdom, so it will be
warm, cloudy to partly cloudy

with a chance for scattered

showers. On Wednesday and

Thursday, a depression is

expected to affect the region

causing a tangible drop in tem-

peratures with skies cloudy to

partly cloudy and rainfall in all

areas, with winds becoming

southwesterly moderate. In

Aqaba, winds will be northerly

moderate and seas calm.

Amman12/19

Aqaba13/25

Deserts11/21

Jordan Valley15/25

Yesterday's high temperatures:

Amman 21, Aqaba 25 Humidity

readings: Amman 37 per cent,
Aqaba 41 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Abbas Al Hakim885446
Dr. Arafat Al Ashhab602507
Dr. Ayman Al Muhaseb875748
Dr. Jamal Jbarah847351
Ferdows pharmacy678336
Al Asena pharmacy637055
Al Salam pharmacy636730
Yacoub pharmacy644945
Shmeisani pharmacy637660
Nairoukh pharmacy623672
Najib pharmacy847632
IRBID:
with a chance for scattered

Dr. Ahmad Qanu281484

Al Quds pharmacy1-1

ZARQA:
Dr. Ya'coub Al Khatib 991772

Khalifeh pharmacy985417

EMERGENCIES
Food Control Centre637111

Civil Defence Dept661111

Civil Defence Immediate Res-

cue630341

Civil Defence Emergency199

Rescue Police 192, 621111.

637777

Fire Brigade617101

Blood Bank775121

Highway Police843402

Traffic Police896390

Public Security Department

.....630321

Hotel Complaints605800

Price Complaints661176

Water and Sewerage Com-

plaints897467

Amman Municipality Com-

plaints787111

Telephone Information (direc-

tory assistance)121

Overseas Calls010230

Central Amman Telephone

Repairs623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs

661101

Jordan Television773111

Radio Jordan774111

Water Authority680100

Jordan Electricity Authority

.....815615

Electric Power Company

636381

RJ Flight Information 08-

53200

Queen Alia Intl. Airport 08-

53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre

813813/32

Khalidi Maternity644281/6

Akileh Maternity642441/2

Jabal Amman Maternity

.....642362

Malhas, J. Amman636140

Palestine, Shmeisani607071

Shmeisani Hospital669131

University Hospital845845

Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9

The Islamic, Abdali 666126/7

Al-Ahli, Abdali664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3

Al-Bashir775111/26

Army, Marka891611/15

Queen Alia Hospital

602340/50

Amal Hospital674155

The Arab Centre for Heart

and Special Surgery365199

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09)83323

Zarqa National Hospital

.....(09)900560

Ibn Sina Hospital, (09)986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital

.....(09)990900

IRBID:

Princess Basma Hospital

.....(02)275555

Greek Catholic Hospital

.....(02)272275

Ibn Al Nafees Hospital

.....(02)247100

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA

AIRPORT

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Home News

Karak family still denied access to young relative

By Rana Hussein
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The family of an eight-year-old girl, who has been kept in a Turkish Embassy child-care centre for the past month, pending a child custody settlement, Monday said they have won custody rights to their relative but still were unable to see her, Jordanian officials confirmed.

Abdullah Shawawarah, uncle of the disputed child Amal Shawawarah, said that on Nov. 27 the Court of Appeals ratified the Sharia Court's October ruling stipulating that the girl must remain in the Kingdom.

Mr. Shawawarah alleged that his niece was taken from her El' home, near Karak, by Turkish Embassy officials.

According to Mr. Shawawarah, the Sharia Court had previously ruled that the girl could live with her Turkish mother on the condition that she reside in Jordan. But if her mother should leave, the girl is to stay with her grandparents until the age of 18.

"The judge issued a notification to all border police with a restraining order

effectively barring the child from leaving the country," Mr. Shawawarah said.

He told the Jordan Times that the family had sent petitions to Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti, concerned authorities and human rights organisations.

"We have contacted the authorities informing them of the final ruling but so far we haven't heard any response and are still unable to see our child," Mr. Shawawarah said.

The family of the child had expressed fears that the child might have been abducted to Turkey, but Mr. Shawawarah said that he received assurances from officials at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that the child was still in the country.

Furthermore, the family had received assurances by Turkish officials, that the child would not be taken to Turkey until the matter was settled.

The child's father, Ali Shawawarah, married Arin Ardum in 1984 while studying in Turkey. He left his wife and daughter in Turkey, and returned to Jordan where he married another woman.

Few months after his return, Amal's father was killed in a car accident and his family contacted his wife in Turkey and asked her to come to Jordan to claim inheritance and settle the custody issue.

After settling for few months in Karak, the mother decided to go back to Turkey with the child, a decision which was met with strong opposition by the family of Amal, who wanted her daughter to stay with them in Jordan, raising a custody battle.

Karak Mayor Bader Edin Wadih told the Jordan Times that the municipality has contacted the Ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs about the latest development and that an answer should be available within few days.

But Mr. Shawawarah stressed that the family of Amal is planning to appeal to His Majesty King Hussein to intervene in the case, "if we do not receive a response within a week."

Workshop urges lifestyle changes to avoid disease

AMMAN (Petra) — Non-communicable diseases such as high blood pressure and diabetes have been increasing in the Kingdom, the Ministry of Health confirmed, stating that this phenomenon is largely due to such factors as lack of physical exercise, high rates of cholesterol, obesity and smoking.

Ministry Secretary General Hashem Jaddou addressed the inaugural session of a three-day workshop, regarding a national strategy for protection against cardiovascular disease, stating that heart disease is the leading cause of death among adults globally.

He said that heart disease is responsible for nearly 30 per cent of all deaths in the first world and 33 per cent in the developing nations.

Dr. Jaddou, who stood in for Minister of Health Aref Bataineh in opening the workshop, organised in conjunction with the World Health Organisation (WHO), advised Jordan as well as other developing nations to follow a special programme for protection against cardiovascular disease.

A WHO representative addressed the session outlining certain features of the programme for averting heart disease which, he maintained, is mainly an adaptation of lifestyle and habits.

He urged Jordan to adopt a programme by which patterns of healthy and sound lifestyles are developed.

Among the places following such programmes, Dr. Jaddou said, are Australia, Japan, the United States and Europe.

Participants to the workshop will be discussing a number of issues pertaining to heart conditions as well as reviewing a draft of a national plan on combating heart disease and spreading health education.

Participants in the three-day meeting hailed from the Ministries of Health, Awqaf and Islamic Affairs, Education, the University of Jordan, the Jordan University of Science and Technology, the Jordanian Society for Smoking Prevention and the Islamic Hospital.

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Kabariti opens water authority workshops

ZARQA (Petra) — Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti Monday inaugurated the central workshops of the Water Authority of Jordan (WAJ) and asserted that Jordan deeply appreciates Japan's continued contributions to the Kingdom's development projects.

Japan partially financed the building of the workshops.

"This project is a special symbol of the fruitful cooperation between Japan and Jordan and we are eager to further cooperate with Japan in our pursuit of advancement," the prime minister said in an inaugural speech at the site.

Expressing his gratitude to the Japanese government as well as to the Japanese Ambassador to Jordan Takayuki Kimura, Mr. Kabariti said, "We would like to reaffirm, to our Japanese friends, that every last fil offered to Jordan is being utilised in the best and most appropriate manner in order to achieve worthy results."

"It is a blessed moment when we can add a new achievement, a new project to the long list of projects and achievements accomplished under the Hashemite rule," he added.

Also during the ceremony, WAJ Secretary General Qusay Qeishat announced that the project cost a total of \$11.5 million and that Japan contributed \$7 million worth of equipment to be used at the workshop with the balance financed by the Jordanian treasury.

"This is a national project which is bound to help the country pursue a course of development and construction, regardless of any challenges posed to the Kingdom," Mr. Qeishat



Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti and Japanese Ambassador to Jordan Takayuki Kimura inspect equipment, \$7 million worth of which was donated by the Japanese government, in the inauguration of central workshops of the Water Authority of Jordan (Petra photo)

stated. He said that the Japanese contribution reflects Tokyo's interest in helping Jordan protect and increase water supplies.

He described the project as set up on 60 dunums of land and consisting of a hangar covering 7,000 square metres in area, administration premises and facilities for transport, a car wash and gas station in addition to a maintained workshop of 6,033 square metres in area and various other facilities.

Mr. Qeishat said that the workshop will drastically reduce the expenses which the WAJ previously allotted to vehicle maintenance.

Mr. Kimura addressed the ceremony, stressing his country's appreciation for Jordanian achievements and various parties' efforts in implement-

ing the project.

Japan is enthusiastic about helping Jordan locate sufficient water resources, he said, recalling that Jordan and Japan signed a deal to supply necessary project equipment, which, he said, comprises 100 different varieties.

The Japanese ambassador stated certainty that Japan would put the equipment to maximum benefit in managing its water resources.

Mr. Kimura also said that Japan is currently financing another project which entails the modernisation of the pipe networks which bring water to the Greater Amman area.

Subsequently, Mr. Kabariti unveiled a commemorative plaque at the project site and toured the workshops listening to a briefing on its functions.

Kingdom's statistics released for 1995

AMMAN (Petra) — The Department of Statistics has released various data related to the Kingdom's population, crime rate, workers, water consumption as well as other categories for last year; the following is a sample of this data.

Jordan's population was estimated at 4,291 million at the end of 1995 of whom 1.6 million live in the Amman governorate, followed by 776,600 in the Irbid governorate and 661,000 in the Zarqa governorate — the governorate with the least number of inhabitants is Karak which is comprised of 64,300 people.

The data sheet said that in 1995, 3,355 million people were residing in urban centres while the rest inhabited the rural and badia regions of the Kingdom and that in 1995 there were 33 births for every one thousand Jordanians while mortality rates were estimated at three for every thousand.

According to the statistical bulletin, there were 8.3 marriages for every thousand citizens and divorce claimed 1.5 of every one thousand marriages.

There were 343,500 workers in Jordan last year of whom 321,600 were Jordanians and the rest guest workers; workers employed in government departments were estimated at 165,159, and the Ministry of Labour last year issued 94,300 work permits to foreign workers.

Referring to the agricultural sector, the figures said that last year 1.5 million dunums of land were planted with various food crops and 400,000 dunums with vegetables and fruit trees.

The statement also maintained that last year Jordan produced 4.9 million tonnes of phosphate, 1.7 million tonnes of potash, 3.4 million tonnes of cement and 57,000 tonnes

PSD announces decline in crime

AMMAN (Petra) — The Public Security Department (PSD) Monday released national crime statistics for November showing a decline of 13.15 per cent for the previous month's figures.

A PSD statistical bulletin stated that a total of 1,017 crimes were recorded last month, a decline by 154 of the crimes recorded in October.

It also listed 95.58 per cent of the November crimes as being solved.

The statement reported that 29 per cent of the total number of crimes last month were thefts (numbering 289) and that attempted murders constituted 19 per cent of the total while murders accounted for 22 per cent of the total number.

The bulletin noted that the Amman governorate suffered the majority of robberies, followed by the northern city of Irbid and that authorities arrested 267 people, both Jordanian and foreign, in connection with these thefts adding that the majority of suspects were youths ranging from 18 to 27 years old.

However, reported embezzlement cases rose in the past month with a total of 45 cases up from 43 in the previous month and the bulletin described these as involving 76 persons, both Jordanian and foreign, and that the embezzlement cases ranged between issuing cheques without funds to failure to honour moneyed transaction agreements.

The report stated that last month police recorded 25 cases involving festive fire, the gunshots traditionally fired to celebrate weddings and which killed one person and injured 11 others, down from 35 cases last month.

In terms of electricity, the department said that power generation increased by 9.6 per cent over the 1994 statistics and that electric power consumption increased by 9.5 per cent.

The Amman region consumed 43.2 per cent of the total water pumped by the Water Authority of Jordan, the statement said.

Last year there were 269,472 vehicles in Jordan which caused an estimated 28,970 road accidents ultimately killing 469 citizens and injuring another 13,184.

In terms of education, the department said that Jordanian public schools numbered 2,657, an increase of 2.4 per cent over the previous scholastic year with the number of students estimated at 1,248 million and

teachers at 59,343.

The department also said that last year the Kingdom operated 355 health centres and housed a total of 41 private hospitals with 2,306 beds while there were eight government-run hospitals with 1,631 beds.

Jordan was visited by 3,723 tourists, according to the sheet.

A total of 48,671 workers benefited from Social Security Corporation services of whom 9,441 were not citizens.

Meanwhile, a report issued by the traffic department Saturday maintained that during October of this year a total of 3,216 road accidents claimed the lives of 53 people and injured another 1,290.

Youth begin local clean-up programme

By Sacha Baggili
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A group of 15 school children toured the streets of their neighbourhood this week, carrying white litter bags and placards promoting environmental awareness, in an effort to rid the area of litter.

"We have often watched people throw rubbish on the ground. We want to encourage people to put their rubbish in the bins and keep our country clean," nine-year-old Luay Khoury, who initiated the "clean-up campaign," told the Jordan Times.

Donning blue government-supplied blue hats, the children, whose ages range from four to nine years old, were accompanied by sixteen-year-old Widad Haddad, herself a member of the international organisation Greenpeace.

"Local schools have been embarking on programmes to educate their pupils regarding environmental care but there are not enough organised groups in the country which young people can join, further their knowledge and pursue their interest in environmental issues," she said.

According to Ms. Haddad, although municipalities have placed rubbish bins along pathways on main roads, more are needed on side streets as well as a more frequent emptying of litter bins established to prevent the common occurrence of excess litter blowing through the streets.

"I think it is admirable that these children have taken part in this event with such conviction and enthusiasm," Basima Ghawi, one of four parents supervising the children, said.

"Their efforts alone are minimal but the children hope to instigate more awareness to the importance of keeping the country clean," she added.

Although this was the first clean-up campaign initiated by the children, Luay, who took part in litter and recycling projects whilst living in Canada, told the Jordan Times that he hopes to encourage more of his peers to join him in his concerns and form a club which would work to discourage litter pollution and organise clean-ups on a monthly basis.

Placards carried by the children, bearing slogans such as: The earth is in trouble, what can you do?, were made from posters donated by the Royal Society for the Conservation of Nature.

Smugglers posing as bedouins arrested

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Anti-Narcotics and Forgery Department (NFD) announced that it defeated various drug trafficking operations this week and arrested an unspecified number of people involved in these operations.

NFD Director Nazih Shriedeh was quoted by the Jordan News Agency, Petra, as saying that department security working in conjunction with badia police seized 800 kilograms of hashish, 14,000 captagon pills, 11 automatic rifles and four revolvers in a sweep in the eastern deserts of the Kingdom.

Colonel Shriedeh stated that the smugglers and drug traffickers had pitched tents in the eastern desert, posing as bedouins in order to carry out clandestine operations, bringing drugs into Jordan which would be later directed to drug consumers in neighbouring countries.

The NFD was reportedly tipped off about the smugglers and keeping a close surveillance over the situation and later implemented a joint plan with the badia and border police force to storm the tent façades where they arrested a number of people, he said.

Without specifying the number of detainees, Col. Shriedeh said that they are both Jordanians and foreigners and further defined these men as among "the most dangerous smugglers" in the region.

Public Security Department Director Nasouh Muhiiddin expressed appreciation for NFD successes in busting drug trafficking rings over the past few years.

Earlier this month, the NFD announced the arrest of four men after a car chase in the eastern desert during which drug traffickers fired on the police force, who returned the fire, injuring two men, arresting the whole group and seizing large quantities of drugs.

UAE marks jubilee

(Continued from page 12)

tions have produced no results with the UAE accusing the Iranians of refusing to discuss the Tumb, Tehran has rejected proposals by the UAE for international arbitration, calling instead for the resumption of the negotiations with pre-conditions.

UAE Foreign Minister Rashid Abdullah accused Iran last week of amassing weapons on the islands with the aim of attacking the UAE.

"We have shown good intentions towards Iran, with which we have friendly and historical relations based on good neighbourliness and mutual interests... In this dispute, we are supported by our brothers in the Gulf Cooperation Council, the Arab League and friendly countries," Sheikh Zayed said.

Iranian Interior Minister Ali Mohammad Busharai was watching the parade along with French Defence Minister Charles Millon and more than 300 other ministers and senior officials from the around the world.

Scores of tanks, including French-built Leclercs,

armoured vehicles and medium-range missiles were displayed in the two-hour parade along the seafont just outside Abu Dhabi city.

Warships cruised the waters while French-made Mirages and other jet fighters flew over a platform where Sheikh Zayed and other local and foreign officials were seated.

The military parade is a customary practice for national day celebrations in the UAE but it was stopped during the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait in 1990-1991 and the 1980-1988 conflict between Iran and Iraq.

More than two million lamps and flags have been installed in key cities for the two-day festivities, which also include fireworks and laser shows.

UAE leaders used the occasion to express support for the federation, the longest Arab unity experiment in contemporary Arab history. "The federation has proved it is capable of sustaining itself and gaining strength as it enters the 21st century," said Vice President and Prime Minister Sheikh Maktoum Bin Rashid Al Maktoum, who is the ruler of Dubai emirate.

OBITUARY

Prof. Mohammad Abdus Salam, Nobel Laureate in Physics

The Higher Council for Science and Technology and the scientific community in Jordan grieve with the international scientific community and the humanity at large the irreparable loss of a unique scientist and the indisputable champion of the cause of development of science and technology in the Third World. Professor Mohammad Abdus Salam, Nobel laureate of Physics and one of the scientific giants of our time.

Professor Salam was born in Thang, Panjab in 1926 and received his education at Panjab University, Lahore and St. John's College, Cambridge. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics (together with Steven Weinberg and Sheldon Lee Glashow, both at Lyman Laboratory, Harvard University) in recognition of outstanding research in the theory of the grand unification of the fundamental forces of nature. His contribution to theoretical physics was recognised throughout the world, and all kinds of honours and tributes were lavished upon him by the world's top scientific organisations and academic institutions.

After the Nobel Prize he devoted his life largely to promoting the use of science for peace and to developing basic scientific research in Third World countries. He was the founder president, and later Honorary President for life, of such pioneering institutions as the Third World Academy of Sciences, and the Third World Network of Scientific Organisations. Among his numerous towering achievements in science and technology, his contributions towards Peace and Promotion of International Scientific Collaboration, and Peace and International Understanding are perhaps the most enduring.

For the past thirty-five years or so he was commuting between the Imperial College of Science and Technology, London, where he was Professor of Theoretical Physics, and the International Centre for Theoretical Physics, Trieste, which he founded in 1962 and soon flourished and bloomed under his inspired leadership to become one of the finest scientific centres in the world. As part of his vision to develop science and technology in the Arab World, he was both the inspiration and the driving force behind the establishment of the Petra School of Physics in Jordan, which has aimed at disseminating advanced physics at an international level as well as activating scientific research in Jordan — a country which he loved most warmly and admired.

In his passing away the world has a great scientist and the region lost a great friend and support. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

WHAT'S GOING ON

FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL

"Le Nouveau Monde" at the Philadelphia Cinema, at 8:30 p.m.

FILM

"Le Visiteurs de Soir" at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation, Jabal Amman at 6:30 p.m.

CHRISTMAS SHOW

Special show and sale of Christmas crafts at the Jordan Crafts Centre (Alaydi), Jabal Amman, Second Circle (Tel. 644555), until Dec. 31.

OPEN DIALOGUE

Dialogue with artist Ismail Shammout on graphics by computer at Darat Al Funun, Jabal Weibdeh at 6:00 p.m.

Refugees say opposition forces on rampage of rape and murder

HERAT, Afghanistan (AFP) — Opposition forces fighting the Taliban militia in the northwest of the country are on a rampage of looting and rape, civilians fleeing the fighting claimed Monday.

Independent confirmation of the rampage — which allegedly took place in villages in the frontline area — was not available, but aid workers and analysts have urged caution in believing the accounts.

"They set fire to our village, our cattle were slaughtered and 15 men were murdered by the Dostam soldiers," Fazio Razmi, who now lives in one of Herat's five displaced persons camps, told AFP.

"Many of the women were dishonoured by the soldiers and kept behind as

prisoners," the woman from one of the mainly agricultural and impoverished villages of the area added.

Fighting between the Taliban and forces of the opposition coalition began a month ago in the isolated northwestern Afghan province of Badkhis, after the Muslim militia took control of part of the previously neutral area from their territory in Herat.

Since a counter-offensive was launched by the opposition coalition — comprising ousted government troops and forces loyal to northern warlord General Abdul Rashid Dostum — thousands of civilians have been arriving here having fled the fighting.

"The Dostum soldiers attacked villages, killed children and old men, and they

have taken away hundreds of women to their bases," said Abdul Latif, a refugee in the Rauza Camp.

A spokesman for the French medical group Medecins Du Monde (MDM), which works in two of the five camps set up for the influx, said that he had also heard stories of widespread rape.

But he added that most people arriving here belong to the Pashtun Ethnic Group — which includes most Taliban — and are traditional rivals to the native Uzbeks, which include the majority of Dostum's forces.

The claims of abuse could be racially motivated, he said.

"Afghanistan is a nation of rumours, many of which are based on age-old ethnic rivalries and conflict," an

analyst based here said.

"For now, until the accuracy of the reports can be established, it is better to treat them as a symptom of renewed ethnic hatred that recent fighting in Badkhis has given rise to," he added.

Nevertheless, Gen. Dostum's forces have gained a fearsome reputation in over 17 years of war in Afghanistan, earning the nickname "gillim jam," or carpet thieves, when they reportedly looted Kabul's carpet bazaar during fighting between rival Mujahideen factions.

Gen. Dostum, who now controls much of northern Afghanistan, began fighting the Taliban militia in the province after he joined forces with the ousted Kabul government.



Moldova's pro-Russian Parliament Speaker Petru Lucinschi leaves the polling cabin to cast his ballot at a polling station in the capital of Chisinau (Reuters photo)

Moldovans choose pro-Russian candidate in presidential elections

CHISINAU (AFP) — In a dramatic vote for change, Moldovans elected pro-Russian parliamentary speaker Petru Lucinschi as president over pro-western incumbent Mircea Snegur in a weekend poll, the central election commission announced Monday.

Mr. Lucinschi, a former top Communist official who was backed by leftwing parties, immediately vowed to tackle economic and social problems in small country sandwiched between Romania and Ukraine.

He also promised good relations with Russia.

"The situation is serious. People expect quick and efficient measure from the president and are hoping for a considerable improvement in their standard of living," he told the Interfax news agency.

"I do not think that we will have any kind of problems with Russia. I personally have close contacts with the Russian leadership and I will use them for the good of our country," the ITAR-TASS news agency reported him as saying.

Preliminary results released by the commission at 7:00 a.m. (0500 GMT) showed that with almost all of Sunday's vote tallied, the 56-year-old Lucinschi had a

secure 9.5 per cent lead, with 54.26 per cent of the ballots cast against Snegur's 45.74 per cent.

The support of the 420,000 voters in the Russian-speaking Transnistria region — nearly 20 per cent of the total electorate — seemed to play a major role in the victory of Lucinschi, who paints himself as a European style social democrat but ran as an independent.

Commentators had also predicted that a strong voter turnout could sway the results in Lucinschi's favor. The electoral commission said voter participation was around 70 per cent, slightly higher than the 67 per cent turnout in the first round on Nov. 17.

Tension runs high in Moldova, which is divided between a Romanian-speaking majority and a Russian-speaking minority.

In 1992, Russian-speaking separatists in Transnistria fought a brief war with Chisinau, but have since dampened their demands for immediate independence.

Lucinschi told ITAR-TASS he would sign a memorandum on normalizing relations with the region — a document that Snegur refused to sign — so that

the unrest there can be settled and Russian troops withdrawn.

Snegur led after the first round with 38 per cent of the vote compared to Lucinschi's 27 per cent, and opinion polls on the eve of Sunday's vote put him as the favourite.

A pro-Western advocate of economic reforms, Snegur assumed the Moldovan presidency in December 1991 and said that if he were re-elected, he wanted to turn Moldova into a presidential republic with the government "directly subordinate to the president."

He was backed by most rightwing parties in the election, including extremists from the Romanian-speaking majority.

"Our policy is the integration of Moldova into Europe, while maintaining our mutually advantageous relations with the countries of the ex-USSR," Snegur said Sunday as he went to cast his ballot in the capital.

The elections were only the second in this former Soviet republic since Moldova won independence from Moscow in 1991.

Lucinschi will serve a four-year term in keeping with Moldova's constitution.

OSCE to decide on mission for Chechen elections

MOSCOW (AFP) — The Organisation of Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) will decide this month whether it will send observers to oversee general elections in Chechnya scheduled for next month, a spokesman for the group said Monday.

Tim Guldemann, who heads the group's mission in Chechnya, told reporters here that two OSCE election experts, who visited the breakaway republic last week, will present their conclusions soon.

Although he refused to speculate on the OSCE's decision, he said it was "possible" that observers would be sent to supervise the polls.

Diplomatic sources meanwhile said that the organisation could send between 50 to 200 observers to Chechnya, if it decides to take on the job.

Presidential and parliamentary polls are scheduled to take place on Jan. 27 across Chechnya, but Mr. Guldemann noted there were still "huge problems" to be resolved before the polls, including material, security and judicial issues.

On Monday, Chechen separatist President Zelimkhan Yandarbiyev urged that presidential and legislative elections in his breakaway republic be postponed for one or two months to allow for better organisation.

In a statement read to the parliament in Grozny by Speaker Akhmad Yaglov, Mr. Yandarbiyev said he was making the proposal after meeting with Russian human rights campaigner Sergei Kovalev, who said in Chechnya this weekend that there was not enough time to draw up electoral lists, or organise absentee voting for some 400,000 Chechens who fled the republic during the 21-month war.

Mr. Yandarbiyev's proposal has yet to be confirmed by Chechnya's Central Electoral Commission. It also came after Chechnya's separatist leadership failed Saturday to agree on a presidential candidate for the polls.

Until the elections, relations between Russia and Chechnya are defined in an accord signed on Nov. 23 between Russian Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin and Aslan Maskhadov, the head of Chechnya's interim government.

Under an August agreement, the issue of Chechnya's final status was put off for five years. Moscow says Chechnya remains part of Russia but the Chechens want full independence.

Meanwhile, ITAR-TASS, citing Russian military sources, said Monday that the 101st Brigade, the last Russian troops to be pulled out of Chechnya, will remain in the Caucasus, with headquarters in Stavropol, north of Chechnya.

Several units will be stationed in neighbouring North Ossetia.

The troops will stay in the region because of the "crime situation in the Caucasus," the sources said.

Last month Russian President Boris Yeltsin signed a decree ordering the withdrawal of all troops from Chechnya.

In a separate development, two Chechens were killed, another injured and a fourth arrested after attempting to break through a police checkpoint on the administrative border between Russia and Chechnya, Interfax said Monday, citing the Russian Interior Ministry.

The men, who were driving from Chechnya to Russia, refused to let police search their car and opened fire on the police, the ministry said.

Police found a grenade launcher, two automatic guns and a shotgun in the car.

Britain, China in dispute over early PLA deployment in Hong Kong

HONG KONG (AFP) — Britain and China, against the backdrop of a flaring political dispute, failed to agree Monday on letting an advance party of Chinese troops deploy in Hong Kong before the territory's handover next July.

The dispute in the Joint Liaison Group (JLG), a bilateral panel discussing handover issues, came less than a week after Britain and China fell out angrily over a bill to define subversion in Hong Kong.

Heading the Chinese delegation, Chen Zuo'er said further talks were needed on detailed arrangements for advance troop deployment, the local radio station RTHK said.

On the British side, negotiator Alan Paul admitted: "We haven't made as much progress as we would have like to have seen."

"But we have agreed that this is an important subject. We must continue our efforts, and we must meet more often on this subject."

"The more we meet the

greater our mutual understanding, and the greater our mutual understanding the closer we will be to reaching a mutual agreement."

The JLG has been a useful conduit for dealing with Sino-British issues, but its work has often been overshadowed by political storms.

Britain last Tuesday ignited a row with China by deciding unilaterally to introduce a bill that will define secession and subversion in Hong Kong as acts involving violence or use of force.

The law, which will be submitted to the local assembly Wednesday, could hamstring any attempts to enact draconian laws of the kind routinely used in China to jail peaceful dissenters.

The dispute over advance troops centres on how many People's Liberation Army (PLA) personnel would be allowed in to Hong Kong before the July 1 handover, when they would arrive and whether they can bring weapons.

The PLA's impending ar-

ival has caused angst in Hong Kong, where memories are still vivid of the army's crushing of the pro-democracy movement in Beijing in 1989.

Cheng Shou-San, deputy director in charge of Hong Kong under the Chinese foreign ministry, last month said PLA troops would start arriving early next year, consisting primarily of medical, logistics and communications specialists, to help prepare for the full garrison.

He mentioned no numbers, but reports in the Chinese-language press in Hong Kong say the advance party would comprise around 300 people.

Governor Chris Patten has warned that the PLA troops will not be allowed to carry weapons, and the point was emphasised by Paul Monday.

However, Chen and field

Burma students stage 2nd protest in 6 weeks

RANGOON (R) — About 1,500 Burmese university students staged the second street demonstration in six weeks Monday when they moved a peaceful sit-in protest to the streets of Rangoon, witnesses said.

The students, some of whom had staged a sit-in protest on the Yangon Institute of Technology (YIT) campus earlier in the day, left YIT and moved their sit-in to the front gates of Rangoon University.

No police were seen near the students, they said. "We haven't been stopped by the authorities," one of the students said from his seat on the street outside Rangoon University's closed gates. "We want to protest against how we have been treated by campus authorities."

Earlier, about 100 YIT students staged a sit-in at the school's main hall to show their displeasure at leaflets urging them to improve their behaviour.

The sit-in protest was also related to police handling of a brawl between students and restaurant owners that led to a rare street demonstration by about 500 university students in October.

A YIT source said the demonstrating students left the campus and took to the streets after education ministry officials refused to accept their demands.

The students had made a series of demands related to the leaflets and the October brawl. YIT sources said. Three students were temporarily arrested and two ordered not to attend classes in connection with the brawl.

Witnesses said the protesting students were upset about leaflets, apparently distributed by another group of students, urging their classmates not to get involved in activities that could disrupt their studies.

They were also unhappy about the way police handled the October brawl. The October demonstration was to protest against the rough handling of the students by police while under arrest.

Officials later detained Kyi Maung, deputy chairman of the National League for Democracy Party, for questioning for about a week to determine his role in the protests.

The day before the October demonstration, two students were seen speaking with Kyi Maung for about an hour at the home of democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi.

The protesting YIT students Monday demanded that two students who had been requested not to attend classes after the October brawl be allowed to return to their studies.

India train blast fans fears of new Punjab strife; 12 killed

AMBALA, India (R) — A bomb exploded in a sleeper compartment in an Indian train early Monday, killing 12 passengers and injuring 37 in what police said could mark a surge in separatist violence in the volatile Punjab region.

The blast and ensuing fire destroyed the sleeper coach and damaged an adjoining carriage at Ambala Cantonment Station near Chandigarh, capital of the northern state of Punjab.

"It was a powerful bomb planted in one of the bogies (carriages)," Ambala Police Chief Rajbir Deswal said.

There were no immediate claims of responsibility. But police said they feared the bomb blast could be part of an escalation of violence before state assembly elections in Punjab due by next February.

"It could be a revival of militant activity because of pending elections in Punjab," senior police officer Satyendra Kumar told Reuters in Ambala town, which is located in Haryana state near the Punjab border and has a large army base.

United News of India quoted Chief Deswal as saying the sophisticated explosive RDX was used.

For a decade until the early 1990s, Punjab state was torn by a Sikh separatist revolt in which at least 20,000 people died.

The explosion was believed to be the deadliest attack on a train in the region since Sikh militants stopped a train near Ludhiana city in late 1991 and systematically slaughtered at least 53 passengers, mostly Hindus.

Police said a senior leader of a splinter group of the regional Akali Dal Party was gunned down on Sunday night.

Bachittar Singh, a former state legislator from the Akali Dal (Badal) faction, was ambushed by five gunmen who opened fire on the jeep in which he was travelling in Ropar district of Punjab, about 20 kilometres from Chandigarh, they said.

The Akali Dal is the political arm of many Sikhs who oppose separatist violence in the state, sometimes called India's food basket. Separatist militancy has largely died down in Punjab, which held its last state assembly elections in 1992 under tight security and a boycott by separatist groups.

"These two incidents have put us on alert," Mr. Kumar

said, referring to the bomb blast and the politician's murder.

Railway officials said there were 61 passengers in the second-class sleeper carriage when the bomb exploded. Thirty-five had boarded the train in the western city of Pune.

After battling the blaze, rescuers pulled 10 bodies from the charred carriage. Two passengers died later.

Thirty-seven people were taken to hospital. Eight were later discharged, while four were in serious condition. Regional Railway Manager Manoj Akhori said.

Mr. Akhori said the 1077 Jhelum Express was coming from Pune in the western state of Maharashtra and was heading towards Jammu, winter capital of the troubled northern state of Jammu and Kashmir. Some Hindu pilgrims heading to Jammu were on board.

He said the 18-carriage train arrived in Ambala Cantonment Station at 1:55 a.m. (2025 GMT Sunday) and was about to leave for Ludhiana when the bomb exploded at 2:40 a.m. (2110 GMT Sunday) in the sixth carriage from the tail end of the train.

'Thousands of Jews served in Hitler's army'

LONDON (R) — Thousands of soldiers of Jewish parentage served in Hitler's army during World War II and fought for the Nazi leaders who ordered the extermination of Jews, the daily Telegraph reported Monday.

A study by Bryan Rigg, a history student now working at Cambridge University, showed Hitler knew dozens of his senior officers had Jewish origins and that he signed documents declaring them to be of German blood, the newspaper said.

Mr. Rigg, a 25-year-old American, interviewed hundreds of former soldiers and their families and examined army personnel files in the German federal government archives.

Field Marshal Erhard Milch, deputy to Luftwaffe Chief Hermann Goering, was half Jewish, according to Mr. Rigg's study.

Goering, Hitler's chosen successor, knew Milch's background and falsified documents to cover up the Jewish link.

German law under the Nazis from 1935 barred anyone with a Jewish grandparent from becoming an officer.

But the German army personnel office in January 1944 knew of 77 "high-ranking officers of mixed Jewish race or married to a Jew."

All 77 had received a declaration from Hitler that they were of German blood.

Cambodian Premier warns U.S. embassy of security threat

PHNOM PENH (R) — Cambodia's co-Premier Hun Sen said Monday his government had tightened security around foreign embassies and warned of a possible security threat to the U.S. mission in the capital.

He told Reuters in a telephone interview he had summoned the U.S. ambassador to warn him of attempts at espionage in his and other embassies, and inform him of police patrols in the area, but declined to elaborate on who was behind the possible threat.

"Last night, I called (Ambassador) Kenneth Quinn to tell him that he should not be afraid, that we are strengthening security because there are attempts to create disturbances and I don't want foreign embassies to be targeted," Hun Sen said.

The comments come after weeks of political tensions within Cambodia's coalition government.

Hun Sen and first Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh have been vying for the upper hand in recruiting from the growing ranks of defectors from the Khmer Rouge, which led the brutal 1975-1979 "killing fields" regime. More than one million Cambodians died from torture, disease or execution during the regime.

A local newspaper cited King Norodom Sihanouk as saying the situation could prove "explosive."

The Cambodia daily said Monday the king had written in his latest monthly bulletin that the competition between the two political groups was "lamentable and

dangerous politics."

The U.S. embassy said in a statement that it had been advised about a possible threat to the embassy.

"As always, we take such information seriously. The government indicated it would take steps to protect the embassy. We appreciate their efforts," the statement said.

Streets around the U.S. embassy were blocked off Monday, and an official at the embassy said the warning was understood to also apply to other western embassies in the capital.

Diplomats from the Australian and Canadian embassies said they had heard about the warning, but had not received information from the government.

A French embassy official declined to comment, and German and British officials said they had no information on the threats.

Havel undergoes lung operation

PRAGUE (R) — Czech surgeons began exploratory surgery on President Vaclav Havel Monday to remove a spot from his lung, but the former dissident playwright has said that his health was not in serious danger.

Mr. Havel's office announced in a statement that a news briefing would be held Monday afternoon after the operation but an official said it was impossible to say how the long the surgery would last.

Mr. Havel, a heavy smoker who spent almost five years in Communist jails, has been ill for several weeks.

But in his weekly radio address, broadcast Sunday, he was in an optimistic mood, saying the operation would "remove some sort of bad point or spot found on my lungs, the character of

which is still unknown."

"However, even if it is something bad, it is so small and its location is so favourable that it seems that I am in no serious danger," he said in the address, recorded Friday.

Mr. Havel, who led the 1989 "Velvet Revolution" which overthrew Communism, said in the address from his hospital bed: "I am here not because my state of health is worsening."

"On the contrary, never in the past few weeks have I felt as well as I feel just now."

Mr. Havel, who is widely respected at home and abroad, was admitted to hospital last Monday, more than a week after his office said he was suffering from pneumonia. Later surgeons described the planned surgery

as "medium serious."

The Czech daily Mlada Fronta Dnes said that a sample of the spot would be sent for immediate analysis during the operation. Based on the results, surgeons would decide whether to continue with the operation. It said without elaborating.

Mr. Havel will keep his full presidential responsibilities during the operation.

Under the Czech constitution, most executive power lies with Prime Minister Vaclav Klaus who is attending the European security summit in Lisbon on Mr. Havel's place.

Mr. Havel's power lies more in his personal authority and reputation for honesty in a Czech political scene increasingly dominated by squabbling and allegations of impropriety.

Pakistan, China agree to build 'cooperative partnership'

ISLAMABAD (AFP) — Chinese President Jiang Zemin and his Pakistani counterpart Farooq Ahmed Leghari have pledged to forge a comprehensive partnership between their two giant nations, officials here said Monday.

President Jiang, who held two hours of talks with President Leghari soon after his arrival from India Sunday, assured Pakistan of China's continued cooperation in the peaceful use of nuclear technology under international safeguards, they said.

The two countries signed seven agreements Sunday to promote economic and trade cooperation, combat drug trafficking and protect the environment. The agreements also covered the establishment of a Pakistani consulate in Shanghai and the continuation of Islamabad's consulate in Hong Kong.

China and Pakistan have "closely coordinated" with each other in international affairs and the "tree of our political, economic, cultural, scientific and technological cooperation has born rich fruit," Mr. Jiang said.

"We are ready to work together with our Pakistani friends from all walks of life and encourage each other in our efforts to build an all-round cooperative partnership between China and Pakistan for the 21st century," he said.

Officials quoted Mr. Leghari as saying that the two countries had laid the basis for the development of a "comprehensive bilateral partnership" in the coming century.

"The Chinese people are ready to work unrelentingly together with the Pakistani people for peace and development in Asia and the rest of the world," Mr. Jiang said.

Welcoming China as a major economic power, Mr. Leghari said "we respect and support China's independent and peaceful foreign policy."

Referring to Hong Kong's return to Chinese rule next summer, Mr. Leghari said Pakistan had no doubt that under the pragmatic policy of "one China, two systems" "it will not be too long before Taiwan returns to the bosom of China."



Belgrade students pass by the Yugoslav parliament building during a protest against government through the city centre Sunday. Thousands of students protested for the eleventh day against ruling Socialists who annulled an opposition election victory in the capital Belgrade. The banner reads in Serbian Cyrillic 'Student Protest 96-97' (Reuters photo)

Defying warning, students go ahead with protest in Belgrade

BELGRADE (AP) — Defying a government warning, thousands of students went ahead with protests against Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic Monday and said they would face down his powerful police if necessary.

About 5,000 students gathered in downtown Belgrade despite snow and near-freezing temperatures. Later, they were marched through the capital.

There was no visible police presence around the student rally. But witnesses said busloads of police — apparently arriving from other parts of Serbia — were being deployed in Belgrade suburbs.

Authorities late Sunday broke a near-total silence on the two weeks of protest by saying they might use force

against the demonstrators, who have been taking to the streets to protest Mr. Milosevic's annulment of election results.

Opposition leader Vuk Draskovic appealed for more demonstrators, saying they shouldn't fear police.

"If Belgrade shows that it is not afraid, the victory will be ours," Mr. Draskovic told the independent Index Radio Station. "We are half a step away from our victory."

He said the demonstrators should be peaceful. "We'll beat violence with non-violence," Mr. Draskovic said.

The protesting students sent an open letter to the police saying "we don't want violence. Words are our only weapon."

In another sign that Mr.

Milosevic has decided to curb the protests, a local court sentenced five opposition activists to unspecified prison terms, said the opposition coalition Zajedno, or Together.

The five were brought to trial for throwing eggs at government buildings, the coalition said. But it accused authorities of ignoring legal procedures by not informing anyone how long the jail sentences were, or where the five would be held.

"This was a political trial," said Goran Vesic of the coalition.

Late Sunday, opposition leader Zoran Djindjic said that protests would go ahead. "We don't need permission to walk the city streets," he said. "We're continuing tomorrow as we have done all these days."

He said the move was "completely unexpected," and added that no "convincing" accusations had been made against him, Interfax said.

"I have been accused of nothing concrete or convincing by the Defence Ministry and the reasons for my dismissal remain unclear to me," Gen. Semionov said.

Interfax added that Gen. Semionov "did not agree with the official explanation for his dismissal."

The president's office said it had no further details on the decree, which was signed Saturday. The Defence Ministry declined to comment.

Gen. Semionov, 56, has been army commander since 1991.

Earlier, a spokesman at the army command said the decree had been received, adding that it had been issued by the Defence Ministry and countersigned by the president, as is required for a position of such rank.

"We are very astonished by the formulation, we do not understand what it refers to. General Semionov has had no trouble, there is no scandal surrounding him, he is building no dachas," the spokesman said, using a euphemism for Russia for the use of illegally acquired money.

"He has no business involvement, he is loyal to the president, he has authority with his men and is well regarded in the army," the spokesman added.

Mr. Yeltsin fired six top generals in October, including the commander of the paratroopers and the rocket forces chief, amid plans for far-reaching reform of the cash-strapped military.

U.S., Japan settle bitter dispute on Okinawa bases

TOKYO (R) — The United States and Japan Monday settled a bitter dispute over U.S. bases on Okinawa, agreeing to cut the American presence and announcing plans for a revolutionary floating helicopter base off the island.

The agreement was signed by U.S. Defence Secretary William Perry and other top U.S. and Japanese officials in Tokyo, culminating a year of negotiations spurred by the September 1995 rape of an Okinawan schoolgirl by three U.S. servicemen.

At the same time, Tokyo and Washington agreed to move forward quickly with talks on plans to strengthen military cooperation and to impress on China that the tightening ties will not threaten Beijing.

The U.S. military will return one-fifth of the 58,000 acres (23,500 hectares) it uses on Okinawa and close part or all of 11 facilities. It will also cut aircraft noise, but will keep all of the 28,000 U.S. troops now on Okinawa, 1,000 kilometres southeast of Tokyo.

The two countries agreed to close the noisy Futenma Marine Corps Air Station in the densely populated city of Ginowan within seven years and to make plans to build a 1,500-metre-long floating helicopter base somewhere off the island's east coast at an expected cost to Japan of over \$2 billion.

"The United States and Japan will seek to build a sea-based facility — a creative solution using advanced basing concepts — to absorb most of the helicopter functions at Futenma Air Station," the announcement said.

The facility, five times longer than an aircraft carrier, would be connected to shore by a short causeway. The two countries will study the plan for a year before making final decisions on the method of construction and exact location.

Also signing the agreement were Japanese Foreign Minister Yukihiko Ikeda, Defence Minister Fumio Kyuma and U.S. ambassador to Japan Walter Mondale.

"This agreement very, very significantly reduces the burden on the Okinawan people while at the same time it preserves the vital security mission which our forces are there to perform," said Mr. Perry, who flew to Tokyo from the Middle East late Sunday to sign the accord.

"No security alliance is more important to all of the nations of this region," he told reporters.

Asked how an agreement which removes no U.S. troops could assuage Okinawa's bitterness over the rape and the continuing military presence, Ikeda said it would require a public relations campaign.

"We shall have to ask the Okinawan people to continue to bear the burden. That is a reality that will remain unchanged," he said. "As for Japan itself, we have to explain to the people how important it is to maintain Japan-U.S. security ties."

The highly visible and noisy presence of the U.S. military on Okinawa has for decades drawn "Yankee go

home" protests from islanders. Objections rose to a fever pitch after the rape.

Okinawa, scene of a bloody three-month battle in the last year of World War II, was governed by the U.S. military until Washington handed it back to Japan in 1972.

The United States has 47,000 troops stationed throughout Japan and has said that it will continue to maintain a total of 100,000 in the entire Asia-Pacific region.

China has voiced strong concerns over the planned enhancement of U.S.-Japanese military ties, but Mr. Perry said those fears were unfounded.

"What this alliance has done has provided peace and security and stability in this entire region," he said. "This, in turn, has provided the conditions which allowed the remarkable economic growth in the entire region."

"It has benefited not just the United States and Japan, it has benefited all of the nations of this region, including China."

Yeltsin sacks army chief

MOSCOW (AFP) — Russian President Boris Yeltsin has sacked the commander of the Russian army, General Vladimir Semionov, the Defence Ministry said Monday.

The ministry, quoted by Interfax News Agency, said Gen. Semionov had been fired by the president for "activities incompatible with his function that reflect on the honour and dignity of a member of the armed forces."

Gen. Semionov reacted with surprise to the decision.

He said the move was "completely unexpected," and added that no "convincing" accusations had been made against him, Interfax said.

"I have been accused of nothing concrete or convincing by the Defence Ministry and the reasons for my dismissal remain unclear to me," Gen. Semionov said.

Interfax added that Gen. Semionov "did not agree with the official explanation for his dismissal."

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"He has no business involvement, he is loyal to the president, he has authority with his men and is well regarded in the army," the spokesman added.

Mr. Yeltsin fired six top generals in October, including the commander of the paratroopers and the rocket forces chief, amid plans for far-reaching reform of the cash-strapped military.

The president also fired the chief of staff of the Russian Armed Forces, Mikhail Kolesnikov, last month.

Zairean rebels capture town of Beni

NAIROBI (R) — Rwandan-backed Zairean rebels have captured the town of Beni and local residents reported looting and raping by Zaire's ragged army as it fled further north, missionary group sources said Monday.

"Beni fell Saturday. Rebels moved swiftly to capture Beni after taking the town of Butembo," one of the sources told Reuters, quoting missionaries evacuated from eastern Zaire.

Zaire has accused neighbouring Uganda of attacking and occupying the town of Kasindi, near the Ugandan border and 60 kilometres southeast of Beni.

Uganda says it shelled Kasindi to neutralise Ugandan rebels but it denies crossing the border.

The Zairean rebels of the Alliance of Democratic Forces for Liberation of Congo-Zaire (ADF) now control much of eastern Zaire after capturing Uvira, Kamanyola, Bukavu, Goma and Butembo.

Africa's latest conflict was ignited by Zaire's attempts to expel the Banyamulenge — an ethnic Tutsi group which first went to Zaire from Rwanda nearly 200 years ago.

The fighting has displaced over one million Rwandan and Burundian Hutu refugees as well as many local Zaireans.

Earlier, Uganda denied a claim by the Zairean army that its military forces had

captured Beni in a cross-border incursion to track down Zairean-based Ugandan rebels.

The town lies 50 kilometres west of the two countries' common border. A Zairean army spokesman said it was taken Saturday, raising fears of an escalation in cross-border incursions as the two countries accuse each of backing rebel movements.

But Ugandan Foreign Minister Eriya Kategaya told AFP Sunday night that Ugandan forces had not gone as far inland as Beni. He conceded they had entered the Zairean border post of Kasindi on Thursday night in response to provocations by Zairean-based Ugandan rebels of the Allied Democratic Army (ADA), who had shelled Uganda from there on Wednesday night.

But he denied the allegations that Ugandan troops had moved farther inland to Beni.

"We wouldn't go into Beni. Why should we go there? We went into Kasindi because it was being used by rebels and is close to our border," Mr. Kategaya said.

Uganda has repeatedly accused Zairean military officials of backing rebels of the ADA — a combination of the fundamentalist Tabliq Muslim group and remnants of the National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (NALU).

Last week, Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni warned that the Ugandan army would pursue the rebels inside Zaire if they attacked Uganda again.

Kinshasa in its turn has accused Ugandan troops of supporting the mainly Tutsi rebels.

Mr. Kategaya said that he believed Beni had been taken by Zairean rebels.

"I don't think our friends in Kinshasa know what is happening on their eastern border. It is not our intention to enter into other people's territory," he said.

Asked whether Uganda had given up on the idea of solving the problem of the ADA rebels through diplomatic means, Mr. Kategaya said: "We sent a message to Kinshasa and proposed dates to meet with representatives of the Zairean government on Nov. 29 and 30, but we had no response."

"We don't have any feelings against Zaire, but we don't understand why they harbour, train and arm these rebels," Mr. Kategaya said.

Uganda says it has not established official contact with the Zairean rebels — even though the proposed multi-national force is due to try to establish road links from its base in Uganda through eastern Zaire Monday.

"They are our de-facto neighbours so we are interested to know them, but we haven't known them yet," Mr. Kategaya added.

Taiwanese minister's visit to South Africa seeks to ease China blow

TAIPEI (R) — Taiwan's foreign minister was due to begin a damage-control mission to deserting ally South Africa Monday as newspapers reported signs Taipei was intensifying efforts to prevent further diplomatic losses to rival China.

Eager to counter the Pretoria loss, the Foreign Ministry said the Micronesian island of Palau would send a team to Taiwan on Dec. 12 to "discuss affairs involving upgrading ties."

The visit by the delegation will improve the cooperative relations between the two sides, a ministry official quoted spokesman Peter Cheng as saying.

Mr. Cheng, however, declined to say whether Taipei and Palau would establish formal ties.

Palau has no diplomatic relations with Taiwan or China but has warm business ties with Taiwan's ruling Nationalist Party, which pledged \$8 million in 1995 to build a resort on Palau.

The Nationalists fled into exile on Taiwan after losing a civil war to the Communists in 1949. Since then Beijing has regarded Taiwan as a renegade province not entitled to foreign ties and vows to retake the

island, by force if necessary.

Analysts said South Africa's planned diplomatic switch, though not final until the end of 1997, was a fait accompli and Mr. Chang would be wasting Taiwan's money if he tried to persuade South African President Nelson Mandela to reverse the move.

"If he goes with the romantic hope that Mandela will change his mind, then he's going to (have to) put more resources into that hope," said Tim Ting, a politics professor at the National Taiwan University.

"It's like your girlfriend saying she's leaving you in a year and you tell her, 'I'll give you 12 roses every day until you come back.' It's impossible," Mr. Ting said.

In the past Taiwan has granted large amounts of economic aid to South Africa in the hopes of solidifying ties.

Beijing intensified its containment policy after Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui made a private U.S. visit in 1995, a move blasted by China as proof of Mr. Lee's pro-independence stand.

Mother Teresa is 'much better' but still in danger

CALCUTTA (R) — Mother Teresa, fighting heart, lung and kidney problems, was much better Monday but still in danger after coronary artery surgery, her chief doctor said.

"She is much better than yesterday. She had a good sleep. But she is still not out of danger," the doctor, D.P. Shetty, told Reuters from Calcutta's B.M. Birla Heart Research Centre.

The 86-year-old Roman Catholic nun, known as the "saint of the gutters" for her devotion to the poor, destitute and dying, had surgery Friday to clear two coronary artery blockages.

Doctors have said long-standing lung and renal problems could complicate her heart condition and recovery.

They were expected to issue a bulletin on the health of the 1979 Nobel Peace Prize winner at around 10 a.m. (04.30 GMT).

Dr. Shetty said late Sunday that Mother Teresa's heart pacemaker, fitted in 1989, had been reprogrammed to boost cardiac output to allow her kidneys to function better.

"She is still critically ill. You have to understand she has got a problem with her heart, kidney and lung," he said. "Mother is not in renal failure."

"We are trying to take care of everything. She is stable," said Dr. Shetty, who heads her medical team at the clinic.

Clinic administrator A.K. Chatterjee said Sunday the renal and lung problems had

forced doctors to delay treatment to correct an irregular heart rhythm.

Mr. Chatterjee said Mother Teresa had suffered renal problems for the past two months and was receiving medication for them. He described her lung problem as chronic.

"At the age of 86, any problem is serious," he said.

On Saturday, American Doctor Patricia Aubanel, another member of the medical team, said Mother Teresa had developed signs of bronchial pneumonia, which was being treated.

Mother Teresa, born of Albanian parents as Gonxhe Bojaxhi, was moved to the Birla Clinic last Tuesday after entering the nearby Woodlands Nursing Home on Nov. 22.

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Gaining from arbitration

THE PALESTINIAN leader, Yasser Arafat, last week suggested that arbitrating the Palestinian-Israeli differences over Hebron by the powers which signed the Oslo accords could be one way out of the current stalemate. This Palestinian offer to submit irreconcilable differences over Israeli deployment from Hebron to "international" arbitration finds expression in the U.N. Charter which calls on parties to settle their disputes by peaceful means including arbitration. True the Oslo agreements do not contain a provision calling for arbitration, but the fact that the charter of the international organisation which calls for arbitration applies to all states it must be read into all treaties which are silent on the subject.

The Palestinian proposal offers a face saving formula for both Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Mr. Arafat. What better way to bridge the gap between the two sides than to have Washington and Moscow which have witnessed the signing of the Oslo accords and remained privy to all the stages of negotiations pertaining to them to submit the necessary compromises? Both Israel and the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) have been trying to hammer out an agreement on Hebron for many weeks, but to no avail. Now, therefore, is the time to use a new machinery to tackle the dispute.

Unsurprisingly Israel has yet to comment on the Palestinian proposal. This hesitation can only be explained by the fact that it is Israel and not the Palestinians which is trying to amend the Oslo agreement on Hebron. A fair adjudication of the Israeli-Palestinian problems over Hebron can be expected to endorse the PNA's side of the story. Still, Israel may wish to seize upon this opportunity as a way to extricate itself from the impossible position it had landed itself into over the redeployment issue. For domestic considerations, the Likud-led government needs a rescue mechanism that would not jeopardise its "credibility" with its constituency as a champion of the cause that aims to rewrite the Oslo agreements. If Netanyahu appears to be only submitting to international arbitration than to a sudden change of heart, he stands to gain all and lose nothing.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

WRITING UNDER the title "Peace is dead", a columnist who writes for Al Ra'i said that thanks to the Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the Middle East has returned to square one in which the no-peace, no-war situation prevails. Sultan Hattab said that it is high time for the Arabs to realise that resorting to world organisations, and even foreign powers, to condemn the Israeli government practices yields no positive results, and that they have only themselves and their intrinsic power to rely on to regain their rights. The present Israeli government seems to be determined to deprive the Palestinians of their right to an independent state in Palestine, to hold on to all the occupied territories of three Arab states and to build more settlements and colonies, said the writer. He said that the foreign nations which support the rights of the Arab people are to be thanked for their stand, but the real work of regaining their rights lies squarely with the Arabs themselves who have many cards to play and can start by ending their petty differences and adopting a common stand with regard to normalisation with Israel and so prevent Netanyahu from reaping any benefits from his extremist policies.

A WRITER for Al Ra'i daily Monday argued that unemployment in Jordan stands at 7.7 per cent of the workforce and not 14 per cent, as official government circles believe, or at 20 per cent, as many people think. Fahed Faneh said the government's statistics are based on records of the number of people who have applied for jobs at the employment offices of the Ministry of Labour and the Civil Service Commission offices; but these people are not necessarily without work and many of them are employed by the private sector. Citing statistics provided by UNICEF and other organisations, the writer said these figures have shown that working people aged 15 to 75 account for 36.8 per cent, and the rest includes 17 per cent students, 28.7 per cent housewives and the rest are pensioners, handicapped or have sources of income and do not need to work. The writer said that what is to be taken into account is the fact that most of the women either do not wish to go out to work or are still students in school, community colleges or universities.

The View from Fourth Circle

Mr. Netanyahu, let your people go!

By Rami G. Khouri

THESE ARE difficult days, characterised by a slow, steady erosion of trust between Israel and all Arabs with whom it engages in a historic and noble quest for justice and peace. In an interview with the Israeli Haaretz newspaper last week, Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu clarified many of the underlying reasons for this regression — which has brought us to the point where many Arabs and Israelis alike, for the first time in recent memory, speak openly about the possibility of the entire peace process collapsing.

In the last two weeks — remember that, just two weeks — we have witnessed the following in Israel: a) the Israeli Supreme Court upheld the Shin Beth security service's use of practices that verge on torture, such as sleep deprivation, shackling and hooding; b) the Supreme Court ruled in another case that Shin Beth could use force in questioning detainees; c) Israeli border police were photographed kicking and beating Palestinian workers; d) an Israeli court ruled that the family of a Palestinian who was mistakenly killed by Israeli undercover agents should be compensated the equivalent of one U.S. cent, as a symbolic admission of culpability; e) a poll conducted for the Israeli education ministry showed that about one-third of young Israelis "hate" Arabs, and about two-thirds feel that Arabs have less rights than Israelis; and f) Netanyahu has visited settlements in the occupied territories and proclaimed that Israelis will continue to expand such settlements and live there forever.

Israeli actions such as the above — actions by the highest judicial and executive authorities, not by the lunatic fringe — make it very difficult for even the most tolerant Arab to find new reserves of patience in dealing with Israelis. The reasons for this are clarified in Netanyahu's recent interview, which revealed some of the ugliest, most unfortunate aspects of the modern Zionist mindset.

Among the most interesting Netanyahu statements were the following: "The conflict will end only when the entire Arab World, and non-Arab Iran too, is convinced that Israel is a fait accompli. Or, alternatively, when the countries around us go through democratic reform... Our ability to reach peace with our neighbours exists first of all by the right of our deterrence power, in the wake of the assessment in broad circles in the Arab World that Israel has great strength... The readiness of the Arabs to accept the state of Israel and live with it in peace depends on our ability to make it clear to them that we are not a passing episode... Until further notice, we are in a Middle East in an era of iron walls. What iron walls do is give us time. The hope is that in the course of this time, domestic, positive changes will take place in the Arab World, enabling us to lower the defensive wall and perhaps even drop it one of these days... I don't understand why we treat the Arabs' attachment to the land with respect, although for them it's a relatively young connection, while our own attachment to the land, which is a link of thousands of years of history, they tend to negate."

If we analyse such ideas alongside the actions I listed above, we find ourselves in a dizzying, emotionally confusing maelstrom of peace making and resistance, with an odd twist that is at once terrifying and terrifying: a Zionist Jewish state whose leadership is blind to the realities of the Arab/Israeli world surrounding it, is psychologically anchored in cement in the many traumas of Jewish history, and is incapable of understanding that its combination

of arrogant attitudes, self-righteous policies and apartheid-like daily humiliations of Palestinians will not bring it acceptance from the Arab/Israeli Middle East, but only perpetual and heightened anger, resistance and violence.

Netanyahu sees the Jewish connection to the land of Palestine and Israel as older, stronger and more valid than the Arab connection. He sees strength and deterrence as Israel's great assets today in seeking acceptance in this region. He believes that the iron walls around the Jewish state provide it with time — time in which the Arabs can submit to Israel's reality, or embrace democracy, or somehow become better people, perhaps more like the Jewish and Israeli people, no doubt. Half a year after his election, during which he has had sufficient time to reveal his true self and beliefs, he revives for all Arabs the worst images of the worst aspects of Jews, Judaism, Zionism and Israel. Rather than resolving the Arab-Israeli conflict, Benjamin Netanyahu and his government's policies now threaten to rekindle it, to expand it, and to revalidate its fundamental existential clash between Jewish and Arab national identity on the land of Palestine/Israel.

"One penny for the life of a man? Approval of torture by the highest court? The prime minister personally promoting colonial settlements in the face of the opposition of the entire world? A majority of the new generation of Israelis believing it has greater rights than Arabs? Is this the Israel that we are asked to accept and live with as neighbours, friends and partners?"

One penny for the life of a man? Approval of torture by the highest court? The prime minister personally promoting colonial settlements in the face of the opposition of the entire world? A majority of the new generation of Israelis believing it has greater rights than Arabs? Is this the Israel that we are asked to accept and live with as neighbours, friends and partners? What kind of indecency are we asked to absorb, if we are expected to withstand all this effrontery from Israel and endure it in the name of sensitivity to the special needs of a special state for a special people? How much patience can the Arab World display in the face of vulgar Israeli anti-Semitism against Christian and Muslim Arab Semites?

Netanyahu's kind of behaviour and thinking will not make Arabs more sensitive to the Jewish people's needs; it will make Arabs want to kill Jews. This will not bring security to the Jews, but only their perpetual enslavement within a prison whose walls have been drawn by the hands of Jewish intolerance. There is a clear line, drawn by all peoples across the till sweep of history, between sensitivity to other people's needs and disdain for one's own moral and national integrity. The Israel of Benjamin Netanyahu — foolishly, selfishly, blindly — is asking us to cross that

line. But this is a line that we will not cross, that we cannot cross.

Benjamin Netanyahu is revealing the worst aspects of his Jewish identity, aspects of fear, weakness, vulnerability, superiority, oppression and other forms of distress and deviance that are deeply rooted in the consequences of the historical angst of the Jewish people. The Jewish people are my brothers and sisters, members of my single Semitic family, integral components of my historical legacy and of my Arab/Israeli culture's achievements, and important elements of the future integrity and well-being of my region's future. What I have seen from the state of the Jewish people and its leader in the past two weeks, however, is alien to me and my heritage and my future aspirations. It is a sad display of the Jewish people's historical vulnerability, ostracization and suffering, poorly camouflaged in the sick and doomed imperial trappings of power, permanence and a grotesque brand of moral and national superiority. The prime minister of Israel speaks of peace and reciprocity; but his words and thoughts only promote war and institutionalised injustices that remind us of the worst suffering of the Jews in medieval Europe, or of blacks in the United States and Southern Africa.

Fortunately — I still believe — Benjamin Netanyahu does not represent all Jews or Israelis. He reflects that tortured aspect of Jewish identity that reacts with blind rage and intolerance to continued episodes of Jewish vulnerability — as happened after the spate of Arab terror bombings earlier this year triggered the very thin election of this new prime minister. More thoughtful and realistic Israelis are represented by people such as Guy Bechor, who wrote in the Haaretz newspaper last week: "Netanyahu has immortalised the thesis of the 'Crusader fortress' entrenching itself against the barbaric outside, as Israel's Arab opponents charge. Netanyahu spoke of defensive walls, but the Arab World has interpreted them as walls of isolationism — to be opened only to strike at the Arabs. This message, like that of Peres (Peres' New Middle East), has been received negatively by public opinion throughout the Arab World — because both are examples of Israel's patronising attitude. In one case, Israel fortifies itself against its neighbours; in the other, it seeks to subordinate them."

The Jewish people, once captives of the pharaoh in Egypt, are once again prone to captivity in their own ancestral home — this time to the captivity of their own zealotry, of rabid Jewish extremists like Netanyahu, who dwell on Jewish suffering and strength without being able to see that the road away from suffering is now open to them in the Middle East. They must understand that the dignity and security of the Jewish people are inextricably and simultaneously linked to the dignity and security of the Arabs around them.

It has been several thousand years since a Jewish sovereign state existed in acceptance and relative peace in the Middle East. We have the chance to achieve this condition again, with justice and peace for all the Semites, for all Jews, Muslims and Christians in this small and beloved land. Benjamin Netanyahu must let his people go, so that they can find peace, equality and humanity amongst their wider Semitic family. Or, the Jewish people must let go of Benjamin Netanyahu and all that he represents, for his view of the world around him promises only war, not peace.

Algerian November referendum — 'excellent ends can be undermined by the use of wrong means'

By G. H. Jansen

THE REFERENDUM held in Algiers on Nov. 28 raises questions: Could democracy defeat militant Islam; and how could it not do so?

Jordan showed the way in 1989 when King Hussein sensibly used democratic elections to curb the rising power of the Muslim Brotherhood by giving the Jordanian electorate a chance to vote for, or against, the Islamic party. A majority of the voters cast their ballots against it — and for a variety of reasons, among which was the Islamists' inexperience and inefficiency.

In Algeria the object was to ratify changes in the constitution and to increase the powers of the presidency. The government plan was approved by a vast majority. The major constitutional change was the banning of parties based on religion, language or regional feeling. Thus, at a stroke, the Islamist groups — such as the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS) and the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) — were eliminated from the political scene. So were also the parties of the Berber minority based both in the Kabyle region, east of Algiers,

around the town of Tizi-Ouzou, and those based on the Berber language. The reform approved in the referendum also made Arabic the sole official language.

The president's powers were vastly increased by giving him the authority to nominate a whole range of officials as well as a third of the posts in a new upper house of parliament.

In effect, Algeria has become a constitutional dictatorship in a one-party state with the country's traditional independence party, the National Liberation Front (FLN), once again in power — behind the scenes.

The referendum was the first popular consultation since the country held a presidential poll a year ago. And that vote came three years after the army cancelled a parliamentary election which the FIS was about to win.

This plunged Algeria into a nightmare of blood and violence because of an insurrection mounted by FIS and the GIA. An estimated 60,000 Algerians, men, women and children, have been slaughtered in a variety of particularly cruel ways, by beheading, disembowelling, bombing and burning.

The figure of 60,000 dead is probably somewhat exaggerated, but not by much. For in villages just south of the capital city of Algiers 250 people have been killed (many by beheading or throat-slitting) in the past seven weeks.

This murderous ferocity has been commonly used by both sides: the Islamists, particularly the GIA, as well as a group of army officers calling themselves the "eradicators."

There have been splits in the ranks of both the Islamists and the army. The Islamic moderates were to be found in the FIS and in its Islamist opponents, Hamas and Al Nahda, while military moderates were found among the supporters in the regular army of the president, General Liamine Zeroul.

The figures given for the rate of participation in the referendum are cause for both optimism and pessimism. For the figures varied in the course of the polling day from 50 per cent turnout to 72 per cent, ending with 85.8 per cent. And this figure was rounded out to 86 per cent — which was so high that it became non-credible. There was also the evidence of local and foreign

observers reporting on empty streets and even more empty polling booths, testifying that either the counting was fudged or that the whole vote was rigged.

But democracy has moral and political power against Islamic extremism only if the popular consultation is, obviously, demonstrably and transparently, free and fair, which is what it was in Jordan in 1989 but not in Algeria.

"But democracy has moral and political power against Islamic extremism only if the popular consultation is, obviously, demonstrably and transparently, free and fair, which is what it was in Jordan in 1989 but not in Algeria."

By being too eager to win at the ballot box, the army defeated its own more important objective, which was to win over the populace to its side.

The Islamists also defeated themselves because they ordered voters to boycott the referendum, threatening to cut the throats of anybody

who went to the polls. Apparently the Islamists did not realise that the Algerian voter went, very bravely, to the polling booths precisely in order to demonstrate their opposition to the sort of intimidation and cruel terror tactics practised by the Islamists.

The mistake the army made was that it not only, too obviously, "cooked" the result but it also crudely obstructed the campaign

rubber stamping decisions already taken by the powers-that-be, an exercise with which the voters in Arab countries are all-too-familiar.

No outsider was allowed to officially monitor the election and it is estimated that if there had been monitors they would have fixed the figure for voters participation at around 50 per cent because indifference and resignation has become the predominant Algerian mood.

Thus, Algeria has missed the chance, or its people have not been given the chance, to set the country's political house in order and a great opportunity has been missed. Although the army has managed to marginalise the Islamists to a large extent, Algeria is now more than ever a divided country because the ban on the language and regional bases for political parties was clearly aimed at the larger minority in the Socialist Force Front so that the long-standing division between the Arab and Berber sections of Algerian society has been greatly exacerbated. This shows how excellent ends can be undermined by the use of wrong means.

LETTERS

Waste not

To the Editor:

ONE WAY in which we could all contribute to making waste useful, is the following: next time you go shopping in one of the big supermarkets, why not take the plastic bags that you have been given last time you went there along?

The bags are usually very strong and can be used again (and again). This way the shops use fewer bags, which help them economise, and there is less waste.

Some shops in England even give you a penny for every one of their bags you use again, and there is a box at the end of the checkout counter in which you can put these pennies. The money then goes to a charity of the shop's choice.

Maybe it is an example we can follow in Amman, and we do not even need the help of the government for it.

Liesbeth Tangelder,
Amman.

The Jordan Times welcomes letters and contributions from its readers on any subject they wish to tackle. Letters intended for publication, however, should contain the writer's full name and preferably address as well. Names can be withheld only upon request and under special circumstances. Letters are subject to editing. The newspaper is not responsible for the return of unused manuscripts.

Arabic TV takes on a global market

Orbit, a Saudi-owned satellite TV station which earlier this year cancelled a joint service with the BBC in protest at a programme it deemed "a sneering and racist attack on Islamic law and culture," has now announced it may quit its Italian headquarters to take advantage of financial incentives offered by a Welsh development agency.

By Barbara Nimri Aziz

NEW YORK — After watching the news on MBC, a privately-owned Saudi television network, Huda Saleh and her brothers Osama and Ra'ed switch to Channel 82 for a Dubai-TV broadcast of an Arab soccer match.

The match they are watching in their home in Brooklyn, New York, is probably also being watched by their uncle in Jeddah and their sister in Jordan.

For United States companies are not alone in cashing in on media globalisation. The Ara-

bic-language media, particularly TV, are also spreading rapidly. MBC (Middle East Broadcasting Centre) and the private and state-financed ESC-TV (Egyptian Satellite Channel) are growing fast. Dubai-TV — at 26, one of the oldest Arab networks — claims to reach 45 million households worldwide. Based in the United Arab Emirates, its staff numbers 500, of whom 60 per cent are Arab nationals.

Dubai-TV has contracts with big corporate sponsors such as Coca-Cola, General Motors, Nissan and Citibank. Its correspondents report devel-

opments from Washington politics to Colorado horse-breeding. (Dubai is considered the sports centre of the Middle East).

Another network, ART, based in Egypt and financed by Egyptian and Saudi sources, is about to be launched.

These Arabic-language networks are trying to make money, but also serve to counter Western stereotypes of Arab cultures.

They reach not only the 21 Arab states of the Middle East, but also Americans of Arab origin and émigrés in Brazil, Britain and Germany. Over large areas of the globe, anyone with a satellite dish can tune in to an Egyptian film, Arab news, Arab soccer games or performances by stars such as Sagar Al Kathum, Samira Tawfiq and Fairuz.

News is a high priority among the politically-conscious people of the Arab World, and networks keep reporters in up to 50 cities across the world.

Most Arabs recognise that their news may often have a Saudi tilt because so many of the networks

are part-financed by Saudi nationals. But taking account of such influences is no more of a problem for Arab viewers than living with the habitual pro-Washington bias of the United States networks.

The Arabic networks cover a range of developments in the Middle East, whereas U.S. coverage makes it look as though there is a continuous state of war in the region.

"The Arabic networks cover a range of developments in the Middle East, whereas U.S. coverage makes it look as though there is a continuous state of war in the region."

The 17 per cent of air time that Dubai devotes to news and current affairs is matched by the proportion of programmes for children, especially cartoons. Ten per cent is devoted to religious affairs.

Children's productions are popular in the Arab diaspora. "Children's programmes and drama

produced at home are free of the heavy anti-Arab and anti-Muslim bias that we see on Western TV, especially in American cartoons," says my Arab neighbour.

"We want our people, wherever they are, to remember their homeland and keep in touch with developments in the Middle East," says an MBC spokesman. "We want them to feel close to us."

Concern for the homeland is also manifest in the generous viewer response to phone-in appeals by MBC and other stations for victims of disasters such as the past violence in Hebron, Lebanon and Bosnia.

Huda Saleh, who is 13, speaks English fluently, but watches Arabic shows several hours a

day with her family. "It makes me feel at home — it's closer," she says. Her parents feel the same.

The growth of these popular TV networks has been made possible by satellite technology. A high proportion of Arab families settled in the West still prefer home-based entertainment, and many can afford satellite dishes, which are also increasingly common in the Arab World. Syria, which has tight media curbs, recently legalised the ownership of satellite dishes, having already turned a blind eye to their manufacture and use.

Perhaps governments realise that while satellite technology allows transmission of political ideas, populations can also be lulled by a steady dose of drama and sport.

Barbara Nimri Aziz is a U.S. freelance journalist and radio producer with a Pacific Network. She is completing a book on the Arab experience in the Gulf war. This article is reprinted from the *Gemini News Service*.

Randa Habib's corner

Help the public employees

A VERY serious study published recently in the press revealed that public sector employees in Jordan work an average of 3 hours 30 minutes every day. Isn't this a choking revelation?

I am happy to have learned of these facts before it was too late; you see, I was encouraging my son to venture into the public sector after he graduates. By so doing, I thought, he could take it easy, be called "Sir", give orders and do nothing, be assured for life that he will have a steady income.

Today, though, knowing what I know, how can I push him into such a career without worry or guilt? I do not want to see my son worn out with work! Three and a half hours, every day, six days a week, that is too much.

If any of you readers have already made similar plans for your children, think twice. Believe me, the public sector could be a trap. If you thought, like I did, that this was a career of leisure and relaxation, well we now know through facts and figures that it is not the case.

Something must be done, and quickly, to relieve these poor public sector employees from their heavy burden. Isn't it enough that they have to carry such huge responsibilities? Do we have, on top of that, to kill them with work too?

I would like to call here, through this corner, for the creation of a special commission (preferably with a large board of directors and a few hundreds very well paid experts) to thoroughly study this problem and come out with rapid solutions, so that our thousands of public employees can enjoy a maximum of one hour of work a day.

After all, that is more than enough, between a morning coffee, a few phone calls, a message from the wife giving the list of shopping for the house, some wool knitting for the servicemen and another coffee before closing the files for the next day's hard work.

Jordan criticises Netanyahu assertion

(Continued from page 1)

to amend agreements already signed with the Palestinians have not only angered the Arabs but also irked the European countries as well as others.

President Chirac met with Mr. Netanyahu in Lisbon on the fringes of an Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) summit, and warned that the resumption of Israeli colonisation in the West Bank was likely to be harmful to the peace process and to send the "wrong signal" to Palestinians, Reuters reported.

The French leader also warned of the risk of an upsurge in violence, even extremism, as long as the peace process remained deadlocked, French presidential spokeswoman Catherine Colonna said.

Reuters quoted Ms. Colonna as saying that Mr. Chirac told the Israeli prime minister that he considered a resumption of talks between Israel and Syria was possible on condition the principle of exchanging territory for peace was accepted. Ms. Colonna said the meeting took place at the initiative of Mr. Netanyahu, who wants France to press the Palestinians to conclude talks on the West Bank city of Hebron.

During the 40-minute meeting, the French president also called on the Israeli government, which has observer status at the OSCE summit, to confirm the principle of "withdrawing from the Golan Heights."

Time magazine reported meanwhile that the Israeli army had started preparing for a possible Syrian military attack on the Golan Heights, with senior Israeli officers concerned their troops might not be ready for war.

A scenario widely cited in Israel is for Syria to launch a limited attack on the Golan, grab a small piece of territory and then force the United States to intervene diplomatically.

Israel has begun preparing for such a possibility. Time reported in its Dec. 9 edition, on newsstands Monday, quoting unidentified Israeli military officers.

The army has held two major tank exercises on the Golan recently, the magazine reported. The report said the Israeli military has increased intelligence gathering, and inspection of equipment, is practising responses to a Syrian attack and is perfecting plans for calling up reserves.

Senior officers said the army was not ready for war. Time said.

"In some places, it reminds me of the way things were before the 1973 war," a high-ranking reserve officer told Time.

A logistics officer told Time that before the recent check of equipment, 70 per cent of the armoured vehicles in his brigade would likely have broken down in the field.

The Netanyahu government meanwhile sought to counter Arab and European criticism of its policies by going on an offensive and singling out Egypt as a key culprit in souring the regional climate.

"Since this government came to office (in June), Arab states have waged a concerted effort to isolate Israel and to give the impression that the peace process is blocked," Foreign Minister David Levy said on Israel Radio.

According to Mr. Levy, the failure of Israelis and Palestinians to reach agreement on the terms of an Israeli redeployment in Hebron was being used as a "pretext" by Egypt and other Arab governments for broader criticism of his country.

"We could have concluded the negotiations (on Hebron) a long time ago but the Palestinians have decided that time is on their side and hope to bring pressure on Israel by presenting it as opposed to peace," asserted Mr. Levy.

"Egypt has played a leading role since the Israeli elections last May in influencing the Palestinians and Arab states to pressure Israel, but it is impossible to force concessions from us with this war of words," he told Israel Radio.

Mr. Levy, in a newspaper interview published Monday, also warned that Egypt was "playing a very dangerous game" by trying to isolate Israel.

Mr. Levy said he had asked the United States to intervene with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak to lower the tone between the two countries.

Late Sunday, Mr. Netanyahu's office issued a strongly-worded statement saying the prime minister "sharply rejected" the recent escalation in Arab criticism of Israel.

"Our neighbours will learn that instead of cursing and threatening, they should cooperate with us to advance peace," said the statement.

Mr. Netanyahu made clear his particular irritation with Egypt by putting on hold a meeting he had planned with the Egyptian foreign minister, Amr Musa, on the sidelines of the OSCE summit in Lis-

bon.

A meeting of the Arab League in Cairo on Sunday condemned Mr. Netanyahu's decision to expand Jewish settlements in the Palestinian territories and the occupied Golan Heights and warned this policy could destroy the peace process.

Defence Minister Yitzhak Mordechai hit back at the Arab League warning, saying, "I hope and I demand that the Arab countries tone down the war-mongering attitude they have adopted against Israel as it will not bring them anything."

"Egypt must fulfill a role of bridging and understanding in the political process between Israel and the Palestinians, and not widen the gap," Mr. Mordechai said.

In Amman on Monday, Minister Muasher, commenting on bilateral issues, said Jordan remained fully committed to its October 1994 peace treaty with Israel and expected the Jewish state to adopt a similar position.

The minister said the Jordanian ambassador to Israel, Omar Rifai, met with Israeli Infrastructure Minister Ariel Sharon last week over comments that the hawkish Israeli right-winger made on provisions in the Jordanian-Israeli peace treaty.

Mr. Sharon reassured Mr. Rifai that Israel was fully committed to the peace treaty, Dr. Muasher said.

Ambassador Rifai sought the meeting after Mr. Sharon was quoted as saying that he could not understand why Israel agreed to give Jordan water when the Jewish state itself was facing a water crisis.

Under the peace treaty, Israel recognised Jordan's rights to water from sources accessible to both countries after denying the Kingdom's share since the early 50s.

As far as Jordan is concerned, "Israel has recognised Jordan's water rights (as stipulated) in the peace treaty," said Dr. Muasher, noting that Israel had fulfilled the first of three related clauses by pumping water to the Kingdom through a pipeline.

The second clause calls for the building of dams on the Yarmouk and Jordan Rivers but this depends on raising finances for the projects, noted the information minister.

Under the third clause Israel should also provide 50 million cubic metres of drinking water from a proposed desalination plant. No movement has been reported in this respect, said Dr. Muasher.

Opposition wants fair cancelled

(Continued from page 1)

million because of Israel's practices," said Mr. Dajani. "Clearly the Israeli actions are harming Jordan's economic interests and that is why the Chamber of Industry announced its outright rejection of the fair and called for its boycott," added Mr. Dajani.

Fakhri Nasser, the manager of the Jordanian International, and National Expo Corporation, which is organising the fair, has been approached by businessmen trying to dissuade him from organising the fair, according to Mr. Dajani.

Mr. Nasser replied by saying that the fair will pave the way for Jordan to organise its own fair in Israel in six months.

Mr. Nasser said in a statement to the local press last month that he was going ahead with plans for the fair, which, he said, will give a chance to Jordanian industrialists to be acquainted with Israeli

products, adding that such an event could help reduce the obstacles which Israel is placing in trade.

Amman Chamber of Commerce has been publishing notices in the local press calling on the public to boycott the Israeli fair.

The chamber's chairman, Haidar Murad, said that the fair was harmful to Jordan's economy and would not benefit the organisers either. "The chamber is calling for a boycott in view of Israel's practices against the Palestinian people and its reneging on the peace agreements," said Mr. Murad.

Mr. Dajani said that if Israel was obstructing trade between Jordan and Palestine for what it calls security reasons, "why should Jordan accept Israeli goods and facilitate their sale in Jordan?"

He said the fair would serve as a form of political blackmail against Jordan and should be rejected outright.

House rejects resignation

(Continued from page 1)

Speaker Srour to order the public out.

Dr. Ammarin did not get to read the statement. But a copy obtained by the Jordan Times showed that the deputy wanted to explain the political background behind the riots in the south. It was not a rebellion against the regime as the government would like to say, the statement asserted.

When Speaker Srour put the deputy's resignation to vote, only one deputy, Anwar Hadid, voted in favour of accepting the resignation.

Earlier, parliamentarians argued over whether they should accept or reject an amended draft of the State Security Court law. While some called for rejecting the draft and refer it back to the government because it calls for expanding the court's authorities, others believed it should be reviewed first by one of the House committees.

Leftist Deputy Khalil Haddadin said that the State Security Court was not a normal court and should be cancelled. "It is quite surprising to see that after Jordan lifted Martial Law (six years ago), the government is now presenting a law that expands the authorities of a military court," he said. "The court should be cancelled."

Islamic Action Front Deputy Bassam Emoush seconded him and contended that the draft law will only portray a negative image of Jordan that is striving to be a fully democratic state.

But Minister of State Hisham Tal said that there are enough guarantees in the draft that protects the right of defendants. He said that all the amendments in the law were necessary.

Only 25 out of 75 deputies present voted in favour of referring back the draft to the government.

As such, the bill now goes to the House Law Committee for discussions. The House has the right to refer it back to the government before deputies start formal discussions of the draft.

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Israel closes Islamist offices

TEL AVIV (R) — Israel closed two offices of an Islamic charity on Monday, alleging they helped "terrorist organisations" by caring for the families of slain members of the militant Hamas group. Police said that under an order signed by the Israeli army's northern commander, they shut

down offices of the Islamic Salvation Committee (ISC) in Nazareth and Umm El Fahm. Both Arab towns are inside the Jewish state. "We suspect they helped terrorist groups by caring for the families and children of Hamas people," Avi Tiller, northern district police chief, told army radio.

Qouriea

restates position

(Continued from page 1)

that we are keen on making the peace process succeed and that we are genuinely adhering to the peace process," he said.

"There are certain actions and violations which Israel has to cease especially with regard to the Jewish settlement plans as we believe that the peace process can by no means continue while settlements are built," he added.

Mr. Kabriti and Mr. Qouriea discussed the general situation in the occupied Arab territories and the deadlocked Israeli-Palestinian negotiations, the Jordan News Agency, Petra, said.

The meeting was attended by Palestinian Ambassador Omar Khatib.

Mr. Qouriea said that he discussed with the prime minister Israeli obstacles that obstruct the implementation of Israeli-Palestinian accords and efforts at the regional and international levels aimed at overcoming the crisis.

"Whenever we meet the prime minister and other Jordanian officials we exchange views on issues of common concern and bilateral relations," Mr. Qouriea told Jordan Television.

"Jordan and Palestine are both concerned over the peace process and keen on ensuring its success," he said.

"We have listened to the prime minister's views and also discussed His Majesty King Hussein's efforts to ensure the success of the Israeli-Palestinian negotiations," said Mr. Qouriea.

Russia, Belarus bring discord to OSCE summit

(Continued from page 1)

Moscow has touted the meeting Monday and Tuesday as a last chance to push for its vision of an alternative European security order, in particular to check NATO's military expansion into eastern Europe.

To this end the summit, the 10th since the OSCE's creation in 1975, agreed to review the 1990 treaty on Conventional Forces in Europe (CFE), signed between 16 NATO states and 14 members of the ex-Warsaw pact.

Mr. Gore hailed the accord. "This agreement and the cooperative manner with which it has been made are outstanding examples of how a flexible inclusive and creative political framework can

yield real results," he said.

NATO Secretary General Javier Solana echoed the attempts to placate Moscow. "We want strong and well developed relations with Russia, reflecting its important status in Europe," he said.

But the basic rift over NATO was clear. British foreign secretary Malcolm Rifkind meanwhile said Russia's view that the OSCE should become an umbrella body for other European bodies — including NATO — had been rejected.

Expectations of the summit have been somewhat lowered after U.S. President Bill Clinton and Russian President Boris Yeltsin pulled out of the meeting, to be replaced by Mr. Gore and Mr. Chernomyrdin. On Belarus, Mr.

Lukashenko defended himself after the OSCE openly criticised him before the summit began. "The attempts to present the referendum results as illegitimate have no grounds whatsoever," he said.

"But he was grilled by his fellow OSCE leaders. 'I believe there is a wide concern about recent developments in Belarus and it comes from all sides,' said Mr. Rifkind.

Mr. Gore insisted Monday that disagreements at the summit would ultimately be overcome.

"Some of these differences will have been settled by the time this meeting ends. The solution to others will need further discussion within the OSCE and other organisations," he concluded.

NEWS IN BRIEF

King congratulates Algerian leader

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Monday sent a cable to Algerian President Liamine Zeroual congratulating him over the success of the last month's referendum on amendments of the Algerian constitution. The cable wished the Algerians regain national unity and enjoy further progress and prosperity under the leadership of President Zeroual.

Israel sells patrol boats to India

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel and India signed an agreement Monday for the sale of two high-speed Super-Dvora class patrol boats to the Indian navy, officials said. The Super-Dvora Mark II's, manufactured by the Ramta Division of Israel Aircraft Industries, are "state-of-the-art vessels, capable of speeds of up to 50 knots," said Ramta Director General Nathan Galili. Mr. Galili declined to provide a price tag for the patrol boats, which he said would be equipped with "stabilight" cannon and night vision equipment and be delivered in early 1998. It was the first sale of the Super-Dvora class patrol boats to the Indian navy, he said.

Prison terms sought for Kurdish ex-deputies

ANKARA (AFP) — An Ankara state security prosecutor has demanded prison terms of more than seven years for three Kurdish ex-deputies accused of helping separatist rebels, the Anatolia news agency said Monday. The three were members of the pro-Kurdish People's Democracy Party (HEP) and its successor, the Democracy Party (DEP). Both parties were closed by the constitutional court on charges of having links with the outlawed Kurdish Labour Party (PKK), which has been waging a separatist war in southeastern Turkey. The state security prosecutor is seeking prison terms of up to 7-1/2 years for Mehmet Emin Sever, Mahmut Uyanik and Muzaffer Demir under the penal code and anti-terrorism law articles on "helping an armed gang."

Italian police arrest Algerian suspect

ROME (AFP) — An Algerian suspected of supplying arms and money to an Islamic fundamentalist terror group was arrested at Rome's main airport at the weekend, Italian police announced Monday. Ben Ali Saïah was detained Saturday by anti-terrorist police following a mandate for his arrest issued by a court in the northern city of Turin last month. He evaded a police swoop on Nov. 7 which led to the arrest of 17 other people suspected of providing logistical support for the Armed Islamic Group (GIA) in its bombing campaign in France last year. Italian police said Ben Ali Saïah had smuggled arms into Algeria, provided false identities for GIA activists, collected funds for the organisation and looked for safe houses. The GIA is one of the most extreme of the groups fighting the military-backed Algerian government since early 1992, in a civil war that has left some 50,000 people dead.

EU ministers haggle over EMU budget pact

BRUSSELS (R) — European Union finance ministers met on Monday to try to agree a new system for ensuring that countries joining a single currency maintain the required budgetary discipline after the launch of monetary union.

Negotiations on a budget stability pact have been deadlocked due to German demands for much more stringent rules.

Irish Finance Minister Ruairi Quinn, chairman of the meeting, said he expected the ministers to advance their plans, but was not sure an agreement could be reached.

"We'll make some progress but how far we get remains to be seen. All the indications are very positive," Mr. Quinn said as he arrived for the meeting.

Finnish Finance Minister Sauli Niinisto also said chances of reaching an agreement were more positive than advertised. "The situation is better than

expected."

The effort to secure a budget stability pact has become one of the most difficult hurdles in nailing down a blueprint for Economic and Monetary Union (EMU).

Under a proposed plan, countries running annual deficits above three per cent of gross domestic product (GDP) could face stiff fines if they failed to curb expenditure.

But if a government could show that a severe recession was behind the deterioration of its public finances, it might be able to avoid sanctions.

Germany wants a recession defined as a two per cent annual decline in GDP. Others have argued for a less rigid approach, preferring a range — a fall in output of between 0.5 and 2.0 per cent. That would force EU finance ministers to decide whether fines were appropriate.

French Finance Minister

Jean Arthuis said the decision on whether a government had an excessive deficit should be made after a proper evaluation of a country's economic circumstances.

"France's position is simple and clear. It is up to the (finance ministers) to decide on a case by case basis," Mr. Arthuis said in a newspaper interview published on Monday.

Taking a shot at Germany's tough bargaining stance, Arthuis added: "When you're in a community you have to try to reach a consensus rather than imposing your point of view."

The inflexible posture of Germany was noted by others as well.

Britain's chancellor of the exchequer, Kenneth Clarke, told reporters the differences among the 15 EU nations over the budget pact were mostly of "emphasis," with Britain more open than some of its partners.

"We are more flexible I think than the Germans might be inclined to be," Mr. Clarke said.

He added that the British government, facing an upswell of anti-European sentiment at home, would reserve judgement on any political decision taken on Monday.

If finance ministers do not reach an accord, EU leaders meeting at a summit in Dublin on Dec. 13 will probably be able to agree only an outline of a plan, leaving a firm decision until the next summit in June.

Separately, the ministers are likely to agree a blueprint for a new exchange rate mechanism that will link the single currency to those of EU nations not participating among the first wave of countries in 1999.

They are also expected to bring forward legislation that establishes a legal framework for monetary union.

Lebanon economic activity down by 5.1 points in September

BEIRUT (R) — Economic activity in Lebanon dropped in September as construction continued a slowing trend, the Bank of Lebanon said on Monday.

The bank's coincident indicator of economic activity fell to 177.0 from 182.1 a month earlier — its highest level since it was created in January 1993. The indicator stood at 179.9 in July. Construction activity slowed in September as cement deliveries dropped to 366,000 tonnes from 391,639 tonnes a month earlier and 395,465 in July.

"Construction which has been witnessing inventory

build-ups continued to reveal a slowing trend," the bank said. The indicator, which takes January 1993 as 100, combines 12 economic series including imports, exports, electricity output and airport and port activity. The bank created it because of a lack of reliable data for calculating gross domestic product (GDP).

At Beirut Port, outgoing transit and incoming freight slipped by 8.3 per cent, 53.1 per cent and 30.8 per cent respectively from August. Also, electricity production on the Electricite du Liban network fell to 662 million

kilowatt (kwt) from 722 million kwt a month earlier.

The monthly balance of payment surplus shrank to \$36.7 million, \$68.4 million down on August and below the September 1995 surplus of \$46.7 million.

This brought the year-to-date balance of payment surplus to \$322.3 million compared with a \$170.2 million deficit for the same period last year. The accumulated balance of trade deficit for the year to date showed a slight improvement to \$4.715 billion compared with \$4.847 billion for the same period of 1995.

Rapid growth in world trade raises stakes of WTO meet

PARIS (AFP) — The rapid expansion in world trade over the past decade and a half now puts manual labourers in European or U.S. cities in direct competition with those in Bulgaria and China, and raises the stakes of the World Trade Organisation's (WTO) forthcoming conference.

The global trade watchdog's first ministerial conference opens in Singapore on Dec. 9, where among other issues the link between labour standards and trade and the need for multilateral investment rules and harmonising international competition for fair trade will be examined.

According to the latest report by the WTO, world-wide trade in goods and services has almost tripled in the past 15 years. This has accelerated growth in many developing countries, particularly in Asia, and exposed the economies of richer countries to direct competition from countries with lower labour costs.

In 1980, exports of goods and services represented \$2,400 billion. In 1995, according to the latest WTO

figures, exports exceeded \$6,000 billion. Trade in goods alone grew from \$2,000 billion to \$4,875 billion while that in services tripled, going from \$400 to \$1,230 billion.

World trade has developed much more quickly than global output. In some years, the growth in trade has been three times greater than that of production. In 1995, for example, trade grew by eight per cent while global production expanded only three per cent. For 1996, experts of the World Trade Organisation predict growth in trade slightly down at around seven per cent, but still more than double the anticipated growth in output.

This disparity between production and trade is explained by the increase in the movement of goods during various stages of the production process with the aim of capitalising on lower costs.

Manufactured products may be assembled in developing countries using imported components and materials. They are then re-exported to their destination markets. One single product

line can thus generate several commercial movements before reaching its final purchaser.

This rapid expansion of trade has taken place against a backdrop of the relaxation of customs controls in some continents, notably with the implementation of the single market within the European Union in 1993.

Globally, duty on goods has become almost negligible. From 40 per cent during World War II, custom charges will be less than four per cent at the beginning of 2000 — their historic lowest level — following the application of the accords of the Uruguay Round of talks under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, the forerunner of the WTO.

Trade has been further stimulated as companies in developed countries have made massive investments overseas to gain access to foreign markets and in some cases to reduce their production costs. It is calculated that in 1995 some \$2,500 billion were invested by companies outside their national frontiers, compared to \$600 billion in 1985.

Japanese economic recovery firmer

TOKYO (AFP) — Bank of Japan Governor Yasuo Mutsushita said Monday the recovery of the Japanese economy was becoming firmer, but signalled a continuation of easy monetary policy.

"While the economy is continuing its modest recovery, (it is showing) increasing firmness in its underlying force," Mr. Mutsushita told a news conference in the western city of Osaka.

Mr. Mutsushita said consumer spending had resumed growth, led by strong sales of consumer durables, after a temporary downturn during the northern summer.

He added that while capital spending had retained its gradual recovery, declines in net exports "took a breather."

Reflecting developments in demand, private sector output is speeding up, Mr. Mutsushita said.

But he said corporate managers remained cautious about the prospects for the economy due to expected falls in public sector and housing sector investment.

"Cyclical factors are now supporting the upward trend in the economy," Mr. Mutsushita said.

REUTERS REUTERS

The Business of Information

| Major Currencies & Cross Rates | | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------|--------|--------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|
| Currency | USD | DEM | GBP | CHF | JPY | CAD | ITL | NLG | FRF |
| US Dollar | 1.5418 | 0.9940 | 1.3123 | 113.70 | 1.3516 | 1516.20 | 1.7297 | 5.2314 | |
| DE Mark | 0.8486 | 1.0000 | 0.8486 | 73.76 | 0.8764 | 982.24 | 1.1218 | 3.3825 | |
| GB Sterling | 1.5835 | 2.5972 | 1.0000 | 2.2088 | 191.54 | 2.2754 | 2551.29 | 2.9125 | 8.8086 |
| CHF Franc | 0.7626 | 1.1737 | 0.4519 | 1.0000 | 86.64 | 1.0260 | 1163.12 | 131.76 | 3.9826 |
| JP Yen | 0.0088 | 1.3554 | 0.5219 | 1.1538 | 1.0000 | 1.1882 | 13.32 | 152.04 | 4.5973 |
| CA Dollar | 0.7395 | 1.3342 | 0.6436 | 0.8658 | 1.19 | 1.0000 | 1124.34 | 1.2716 | 3.8426 |
| IT Lira | 0.0007 | 1.0173 | 0.3917 | 0.0866 | 1334.22 | 0.8918 | 1.0000 | 11.41 | 3.4514 |
| NL Guilder | 0.5781 | 89.10 | 0.3431 | 75.89 | 85.89 | 0.7812 | 875.75 | 1.0000 | 3.0235 |
| FR Franc | 0.1912 | 0.2947 | 0.1135 | 25.0860 | 21.71 | 0.2583 | 33.06 | 33.0800 | 1.0000 |

| Energy | | | | | | | | | |
|----------|--------|----------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Oil | Last | Previous | | | | | | | |
| Brent | 23.50 | 23.60 | | | | | | | |
| W. Texas | 22.65 | 22.65 | | | | | | | |
| Bony | 23.50 | 23.60 | | | | | | | |
| Dubai | 21.05 | 20.83 | | | | | | | |
| UL Gas | 216.00 | 214.00 | | | | | | | |

| Mid-East Currencies | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|--------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--|--|--|--|
| Currency | USD | DEM | GBP | CHF | JPY | | | | |
| SA Riyal | 0.2666 | 0.4112 | 0.15836 | 0.35023 | 30.3287 | | | | |
| AE Dirham | 0.2723 | 0.41689 | 0.1517 | 0.35762 | 30.9703 | | | | |
| KW Dinar | 3.3428 | 5.19464 | 1.9531 | 4.3982 | 380.228 | | | | |
| BR Dinar | 0.3760 | 4.10172 | 1.57953 | 3.49284 | 302.572 | | | | |
| CY Pound | 2.1422 | 3.3035 | 1.272 | 2.8122 | 243.571 | | | | |

| Metal Prices | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|--------|--------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Metal | Unit | Price | | | | | | | |
| Gold (oz) | 370.7 | 371.2 | | | | | | | |
| Silver (oz) | 4.71 | 4.73 | | | | | | | |
| Platinum (oz) | 373.25 | 374.25 | | | | | | | |
| AL (3 Months) | 1533 | 1536 | | | | | | | |
| CU (3 Months) | 2215 | 2218 | | | | | | | |
| Zinc (3 Months) | 1070 | 1071 | | | | | | | |
| Lead (3 Months) | 692 | 693 | | | | | | | |
| NI (3 Months) | 5860 | 5870 | | | | | | | |

| Currency Deposit Rates (Bid) | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------|---------|----------|----------|----------|--------|--|--|--|--|
| Currency | 1 Month | 3 Months | 6 Months | 9 Months | 1 Year | | | | |
| USD | 5.32 | 5.38 | 5.42 | 5.48 | 5.53 | | | | |
| GBP | 6.18 | 6.43 | 6.59 | 6.83 | 6.82 | | | | |
| JPY | 0.25 | 0.30 | 0.33 | 0.37 | 0.37 | | | | |
| DEM | 3.12 | 3.10 | 3.07 | 3.00 | 3.08 | | | | |
| FRF | 3.34 | 3.36 | 3.40 | 3.40 | 3.34 | | | | |
| CHF | 1.63 | 1.67 | 1.61 | 2.00 | 2.00 | | | | |
| ITL | 7.31 | 7.06 | 6.81 | 6.83 | 6.50 | | | | |

| Main Equity Indices | | | | | | | | | |
|---------------------|------------|----------|---------|--------|---------|---------|---------|--|--|
| Bourse | Index | Value | Chng | % Chng | High | Low | Pr Cls | | |
| New York | DOW JONES | 6494.87 | -26.83 | -0.41 | 6522.08 | 6472.88 | 6521.7 | | |
| New York | S&P 500 | 754.11 | -2.91 | -0.38 | 757.03 | 751.49 | 757.02 | | |
| London | FT-SE 100 | 4038.2 | -19.8 | -0.49 | 4058.9 | 4033.2 | 4058 | | |
| Tokyo | NIKKEI 225 | 20674.69 | -345.67 | -1.64 | 21067.7 | 20674.7 | 21020.4 | | |
| Paris | CAC 40 | 2318.63 | 2.97 | 0.13 | 2324.12 | 2305.34 | 2315.66 | | |
| Frankfurt | DAX | 2888.6 | 13.08 | 0.46 | 2880.24 | 2853.18 | 2845.52 | | |

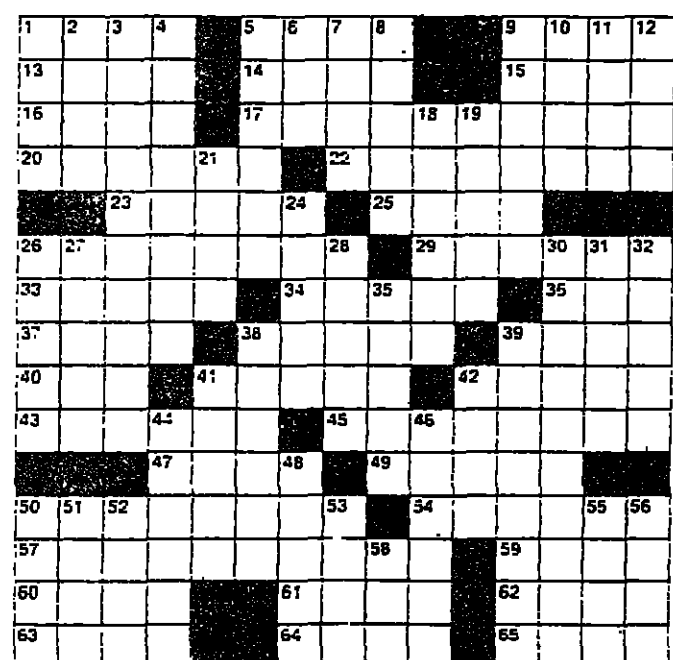
| Energy | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|-------|-------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Commodity | Unit | Price | | | | | | | |
| Coffee (c/lb) | 0 | Spot | | | | | | | |
| Cocoa (\$/ton) | 1416 | Spot | | | | | | | |
| Sugar (\$/ton) | 308.8 | Spot | | | | | | | |
| Wheat (\$/ton) | 131 | Spot | | | | | | | |
| Soya (c/lb) | 21.68 | Spot | | | | | | | |
| Tea (c/lb) | 120 | Spot | | | | | | | |
| Barley (\$/ton) | 2.22 | Spot | | | | | | | |
| Rice (\$/ton) | 470 | Spot | | | | | | | |

| JOD Cross Rates | | | | | | | | | |
|-----------------|--------|--------|--|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| Currency | Buy | Sell | | | | | | | |
| US Dollar | 0.708 | 0.710 | | | | | | | |
| GB Sterling | 1.191 | 1.197 | | | | | | | |
| DE Mark | 0.4598 | 0.4621 | | | | | | | |
| CH Franc | 0.8409 | 0.8438 | | | | | | | |
| FR Franc | 0.1358 | 0.1365 | | | | | | | |
| JP Yen | 0.0215 | 0.0246 | | | | | | | |
| NL Guilder | 0.41 | 0.4121 | | | | | | | |
| IT Lira | 0.467 | 0.4693 | | | | | | | |

* Source: Central Bank of Jordan.

THE Daily Crossword

- ACROSS
- Young lady
 - Opened one's eyes
 - An ump's call
 - Director Kazan
 - Wickedness
 - Pelvic bones
 - Australian prime minister
 - Part of a table setting
 - Musical shows
 - Containers for nuts and bolts
 - Grain blight
 - AK city
 - Kitchen utensil
 - Wrote
 - Urban areas
 - Minaret
 - French friend
 - Pit
 - Subdued
 - "Iliad," e.g.
 - Born's land abbr.
 - Vietnam city
 - Leg joint
 - "I'll Had A Hammer" singer
 - More
 - Fashionable
 - Biblical proposition
 - Squelched
 - Aquatic mammals
 - Attic
 - Part of a table setting
 - Dimensions
 - Gaelic
 - Different
 - Author Bagnold
 - Changed color
 - Gives approval
 - Selves



by Bernice Gordon

- DOWN
- Funny man Lew, once
 - Ingredient in body lotion
 - Part of a table setting
 - Serving to soak thoroughly
 - Smith and — (pistol)
 - Eggs
 - Scottish wear
 - Musical John
 - Lustrous
 - ever need
 - Arbitrary order
 - All — (attentive)
 - Barrel maker
 - Comic character, Fudd
 - Protection: var.
 - Mountain range in Wyoming
 - Gatherings for men
 - Pith helmet
 - Mechanical worker
 - Part of a table setting
 - M. Zola
 - Certain gambler
 - Dams
 - Tailor: Lal.
 - Signature on a check
 - Famous skater
 - Rectangular column
 - Swallowed hard
 - Former U.S. coins
 - Turn one's back — (H. Ellis)
 - Made haste
 - Spectral
 - Part of a church
 - Farm structure
 - Basso Pinza
 - Williams and Lewis
 - Hallucinogenic

Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



HOROSCOPE FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3, 1996

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) Your ideas may seem rather wild today, however you can prove successful and make your life more interesting if you just consider all your options. Later this evening seek out the advice of a bigwig to complete any project.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) Some rather strange suggestion you get today could prove helpful, if you follow the directions to the letter. A financial matter later this evening may lead to a pot of gold, so be sure you dig in the right location.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) If a change in association matters occurs today, this could help you to attain your goals, so be alert to any suggestions. Later this evening you can stay at home with your loved ones and simply relax for the day ahead.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) Try a different approach today at your career activities and thereby you can gain much success. Have a conversation with another knowledgeable person who has different ideas from yours and thereby have some other insight.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) A good friend can give you a good suggestion today on how best to get your fine talents working, so listen carefully and follow any ideas provided. Later this evening you can proceed with tasks assigned from those in authority.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Be sure to handle today your responsibilities in the business world and thereby gain prosperity and success. The evening can be happy at home with your loved ones, so make whatever effort is needed to make them respond.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Your intuition and mature judgment needs to be better organized if you are to accomplish the most today and get the eye of a bigwig. Later this evening you can meet with close friends and have fun together out on the town.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Do something unusual and very helpful at home today, thereby you can gain the respect and admiration of those under your roof. You have a happy evening there and can retire feeling content through your efforts.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Concentrate on the various persons who can assist you in the outside world and thereby explore new activities. Later this evening can be spent with your mate being romantic with him or her and showing much affection.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Keep rooted to your career activities today and don't permit a private concern to deter you in gaining more assets. Tonight you can seek out the advice of a knowledgeable person and with the assistance of fellow associates proceed.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) Make plans today for a good time with close friends and loved ones in the days ahead. Don't permit a stubborn fellow associate to dissuade you from following through with the ideas presented by a knowledgeable person.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) Place your family ahead of any public outlet today and thereby you can receive quite a lot of recognition for your efforts. An outsider could give you the wrong slant this evening on how to get ahead so be cautious.

Birthstone of December: Turquoise — Zircon.

France lift Davis Cup after marathon

MALMO, Sweden (R) — France won the Davis Cup on Sunday after a gripping nine-hour feast of top quality tennis and two five-set thrillers that Stefan Edberg described as "the best tennis that can ever happen".

Arnaud Boetsch overcame a spirited challenge from Edberg's stand-in Nicklas Kulti to win the last compelling five-set rubber 7-6 2-6 4-6 7-6 10-8.

It was the first time since the Davis Cup began in 1900 that the deciding match of the final had gone to five sets.

After such a display, no-one deserved to lose and the exhausted Kulti, in tears, was comforted by Edberg as the French team danced with joy.

Edberg, veteran of more than 10 years of Davis Cup campaigns, said afterwards: "I was lucky to have been here today. It was the most exciting Davis Cup match I've ever been to. I feel privileged."

The trophy is France's second against the odds in five years. Under Yannick Noah's charismatic leadership they upset the mighty United States in Lyon in 1991 and Noah brought them to Sweden as underdogs again.

But Sweden's fortunes suffered just six games into the first match on Friday when Edberg fell, twisted his ankle and went on to lose to Cedric Pioline.

Edberg, playing his last competition before retiring, was forced to pull out of Dunday's decisive match and Kulti, who towards the end of the match was suffering from bouts of cramp,

fought like a lion.

"I would have done anything to win this match," Kulti said afterwards. "I just couldn't do more."

Kulti, ranked 32 places below the Frenchman, earned three match points in the 14th game of the final set, but he was unable to convert them. Boetsch, using all his cool and speed round the court, hung on with some fine serving before breaking the Swede in the 17th game and serving for the match.

Earlier top Swede Thomas Enqvist won another nerve-sapping five-set marathon against Cedric Pioline 3-6 6-7 6-4 6-4 9-7 to keep the home team in the tie, after France had clinched Saturday's doubles.

"That was the longest match of my career," Enqvist said afterwards. "And probably the most emotional."

It was the first time in 11 years that the final remained undecided until a fifth match, and the converted factory housing the tie erupted in noisy gallic celebration.

Noah hoisted Edberg, winner of six Grand Slams in a 14-year professional career, onto his shoulders and carried him round the arena to wild applause.

"However happy we are we will not leave without the whole team voicing our respects and appreciation for Stefan, for all he has done," Noah said.

Noah described the final rubber as "beautiful".

"In the history of Davis Cup there has never been a day like it," he added.



Arnaud Boetsch of France shakes hands with Cedric Pioline after he won his Davis Cup match against Nicklas Kulti of Sweden (Reuters photo)

Gripping Davis Cup final silences critics

MALMO (R) — A gripping Davis Cup final, for the first time in the final set of the final match by France over Sweden was just what the competition needed to counter critics who accuse it of crowding the tennis schedule.

Leading American players including Andre Agassi have suggested the Cup should be played at most every other year and maybe once every four years.

But nobody in Malmo at the weekend would have agreed.

Sweden's Stefan Edberg, who retired after the tie, said the Cup had to be played annually.

"It was probably the best tennis that can ever happen," Edberg said. "It is one of the world's biggest competitions in any sport and it involves so many countries."

Yannick Noah, who has now captained France twice to victory in the final, concurred.

"What I love about the Davis Cup is it is not about contracts, schedules and business. It's different," Noah said.

"You have to sacrifice things for others, for the team. If you don't want to give up four weeks of your schedule, that's tough. You don't have to play."

International Tennis Federation president Brian Tabin said he worked hard to find suitable dates that fitted into the players' schedules.

"The main element that sets it apart from other tournaments is the home and away format which allows teams to generate great national interest and pride," he said.

Perkins eyes 3rd Olympic gold

BRISBANE (AP) — Two-time Olympic games swimming gold medalist Kieren Perkins has decided to chase a third 1,500 meters freestyle title at the 2000 games in Sydney.

Perkins won the 1,500 meters freestyle at both the Barcelona and Atlanta Games and wants to crown his career by winning a third gold medal in his own country.

"I want to be there," he said. "It would have been very easy for me to retire after Atlanta. To go away with two gold medals. But this is Sydney, it's in my own country, it's Australia's games."

Triple-world record holder Perkins may even compete in three events in Sydney, according to his coach John Carew.

"Kieren can stand up to a lot of training and we will be looking at both the 400 meters and 1,500 meters for Sydney," Carew said. "And if his sprinting ability returns we'll have a crack at the 200 meters as well."

Perkins, 22, failed to qualify for the 400 meters at Atlanta despite being the world record holder over the distance and the silver medalist at Barcelona.

Perkins, who this week announced his engagement to longtime girlfriend Samantha Liu, told Optus Television that he won't be putting pressure on himself as the Sydney Games approach.

"I could go out there and lose by a million miles, but just to be part of it would be the ultimate," he said. "It would be the crowning glory of my career."

Perkins only took up swimming because of a freak accident.

He needed 86 stitches in a leg wound after falling through a plate glass door at his family's home 13 years ago and was ordered to swim as part of a rehabilitation program.

For three months he had to be carried to the pool because he was unable to walk.

Swimming became his hobby, and ultimately his obsession.

Sacchi quits Italy to coach AC Milan

ROME (R) — Italy's embattled soccer coach Arrigo Sacchi has resigned for a new job at AC Milan, ending months of speculation about his future, officials said Monday.

Italian Soccer Federation (FIGC) special commissioner Raffaele Pagnozzi said Sacchi called him shortly before midnight on Sunday to advise him of his decision.

He said Sacchi would be joining Milan, where he spent five glory years until his appointment to the national side in 1991.

Sacchi succeeds Uruguayan Oscar Washington Tabarez, who has had a bleak six months with the club and saw the side lose 3-2 at Piacenza on Sunday and drop to ninth in the league.

"Sacchi called me at a quarter to midnight to tell me he intended to end his contract with the federation," Pagnozzi told the Italian news agency ANSA.

"Sacchi will be meeting with the FIGC legal office to formalise what amounts to his resignation," Pagnozzi said.

It was not yet clear who would succeed Sacchi in what is arguably the most criticised job in Italian soccer.

Recent speculation has focused on former World

Cup-winning goalkeeper Dino Zoff, now chairman of Lazio, or a stop-gap appointment of under-21 coach Cesare Maldini until next summer.

Sacchi, 50, took Italy to the World Cup final against Brazil in Los Angeles in 1994 but has been under intense pressure since the side crashed out of the European Championships in the first round last summer.

Calls for his dismissal mounted last month after Italy lost 2-1 to Bosnia in a friendly in Sarajevo, the team's final test before they play England away next February in a crunch qualifier for the 1998 World Cup.

Sacchi, whose contract is worth a reported \$1.07 million a year and runs up to the world cup finals, has a record of 34 wins, 10 draws and nine defeats in the 53 matches he has conducted since November 1991.

He has faced repeated criticism for frequent changes to the side and a failure to hit it off with some of the stars of Italian soccer, notably Gianluca Vialli of English Premier League side Chelsea.

His most loyal supporter, FIGC chairman Antonio Matarrese, was forced to step down last summer, prompting news reports that sacchi would fall with him.

Pagnozzi, brought in to head the federation pending the election of a new chairman on December 14, said he would leave the decision on Sacchi's replacement to the new leadership.

The favourite for the chairmanship, league president Luciano Nizzola, said he would decide on a successor as soon as he was elected. "We will talk about it again after December 14," he said.

Sacchi joined AC Milan in 1986 and coached the side to some of their greatest triumphs, including the league title in 1988, two European cups and two Intercontinental Cups.

Tabarez signed a one-year contract with Milan this season after the highly successful Fabio Capello left for Real Madrid.

The club insisted as recently as last Thursday that his job was safe for the rest of the season.

Milan were not available for comment but Italian television said Sacchi's decision followed talks with Milan's owner, media mogul and former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi.

His first test with the club will come on Wednesday when Milan need a point at home to Norway's Rosenborg in a Champions League Group D match to stay in the competition.

Broncos clinch division, home field in playoffs; Panthers rout Buccaneers 24-0

DENVER (R) — John Elway ran for one touchdown and threw for two as the Denver Broncos clinched the AFC Western Division title and home-field advantage throughout the playoffs with a 34-7 victory over the Seattle Seahawks Sunday.

With its ninth straight win, Denver (12-1) became the first team to clinch a division title this season. It is the Broncos' first AFC West crown since 1991.

"I'm still going to take each game seriously and get ready for the playoffs," said coach Mike Shannon. "I'm worried already we may have clinched too early."

Elway, 17-of-27 for 189 yards, left with 19 seconds to go in the first period because of a pulled hamstring. He returned after one possession. Elway, who exited for good early in the fourth quarter as a precaution, threw for more than 3,000 yards for a season for the 11th time in his career.

Terrell Davis rushed for 106 yards and a touchdown on 26 carries for the Broncos.

"We mixed up the running with Terrell and the passing," said Elway. "I ran one in. Keeping it varied is the reason for our success this year."

Rick Miter, in his second game starting for the injured John Friesz, was 13-for-28 for 177 yards with a touchdown and two interceptions for Seattle (5-7).

Denver is a win away from matching 1984's team records for consecutive victories (10) and wins in a season (13).

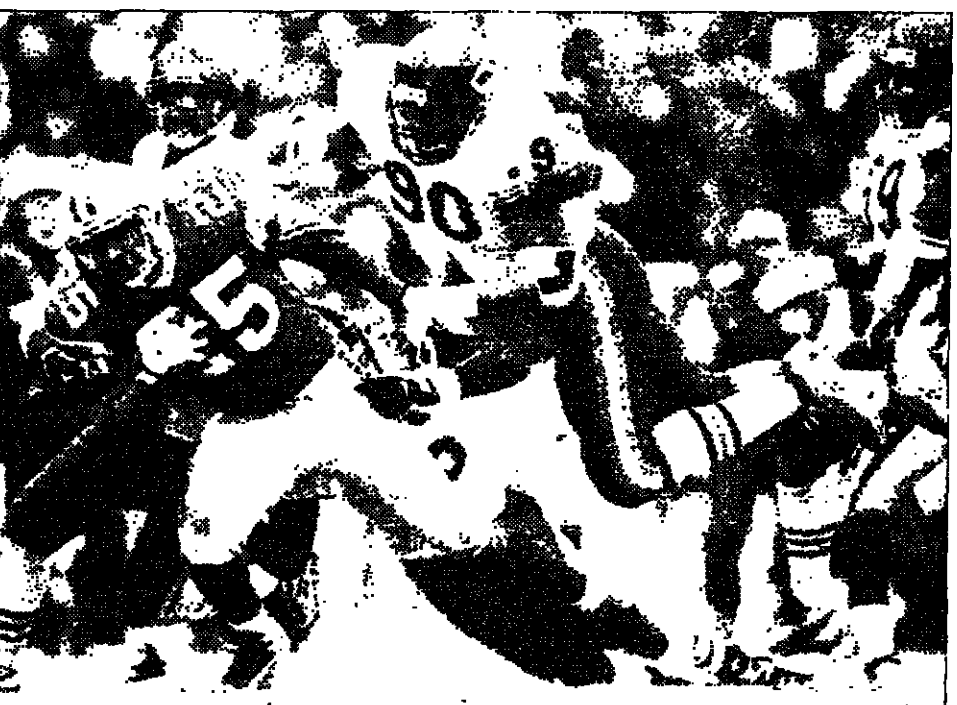
In Green Bay, Desmond Howard's 75-yard punt return with 5:30 left in the third quarter snapped a tie and Antonio Freeman had a career-high 10 receptions and 156 yards in his return from a broken arm as the Packers rolled to a 28-17 victory over the Chicago Bears.

Freeman said quarterback Brett Favre had been excited to have him rejoin the receiver-depleted Packers. "We have to have a coming-back party," Freeman quoted Favre as saying.

Green Bay, an NFC-best 10-3, next faces the NFL-best Broncos.

Chicago (5-8) was held under 20 points for the fifth time in six games.

In Baltimore, Vinny Testaverde passed for three touchdowns and Derrick Alexander had seven receptions for a career-high 198 yards to lead the Ravens to a 31-17 upset of the Pittsburgh Steelers.



Green Bay Packers' running back Dorsey Levens (25) is stopped by Chicago Bears' defensive end Alonzo Spellman (90) after a twenty-four yard gain in the fourth quarter at Lambeau Field in Green Bay (Reuters photo)

The Ravens (4-9) snapped a four-game losing streak and avenged a 31-17 loss to the Steelers in week 2 at Pittsburgh.

"We played today like we should have played all year," said Testaverde. "We have lost four games we could have won, make that should have won. We proved we are as good as

Pittsburgh and that means any team in the conference," Baltimore's Bam Morris played his first game against his former team and rushed for 100 yards on 28 carries.

Morris was released by the Steelers in July after pleading guilty to marijuana possession.

In Indianapolis, Cary Blanchard kicked a 49-yard

field goal 8:14 into overtime to lift the Colts to a 13-10 victory over the injury-riddled Buffalo Bills.

Buffalo (9-4) played without quarterback Jim Kelly (sore hamstring), running back Thurman Thomas (ankle) and linebacker Bryce Paup (groin). Todd Collins started for Kelly.

The Colts (7-6) were also

without their starting quarterback, Jim Harbaugh (injured knee). Paul Justin made his second career start for the Colts.

In Philadelphia, Ty Detmer threw for 284 yards and three first-half touchdowns as the Eagles snapped a three-game losing streak with a 24-0 stomping of the New York Giants.

The Eagles (8-5) forged a three-way tie for first place in the NFC East with Dallas and Washington.

At Carolina, defensive end Shawn King returned a fumble 12 yards for a touchdown and Howard Griffith and Anthony Johnson had scoring runs as the Panthers recorded their first-ever shutout, 24-0 over the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

The Panthers (9-4) won their fourth straight, improved to 6-0 at home and closed within one-half game of first-place San Francisco in the NFC West. The 49ers are at Atlanta Monday night before hosting Carolina next week.

The Panthers are bidding to become the first NFL franchise to earn a playoff berth in its second season.

In Jacksonville, Mike Hollis kicked five field goals and Mark Brunell's 48-yard touchdown pass to Keenan McCardell late in

the third quarter put the Jaguars ahead to stay for a 30-27 victory over the Cincinnati Bengals.

Brunell recorded his sixth 300-yard passing effort of the season, going 21-for-34 for 356 yards.

At Minnesota, Brad Johnson passed for 238 yards and four touchdowns to four receivers as the Vikings routed the Cardinals 41-17, ending Arizona's three-game win streak under resurrected quarterback Boomer Esiason.

Johnson, making his third straight start in place of the injured Warren Moon, completed 19-of-26 passes.

At New York, Steve McNair threw for two first-quarter touchdown passes and Eddie George ran for two scores as the Houston Oilers thrashed the hapless Jets, 35-10.

McNair started his second game this season in place of the injured Chris Chandler for Houston (7-6).

New York (1-12) has lost 10 straight home games, a franchise record.

Quarterback Neil O'Donnell, who was supposed to start for the first time since October 6, strained a calf muscle during warmups and did not play.

In Oakland, Derrick Finner and Tim Brown scored touchdowns in the second quarter and the Raiders (6-7) came within 2:34 of their first shutout in four years in a 17-7 victory over the reeling Miami Dolphins (6-7).

In New Orleans, Tony Banks passed for 231 yards as the St. Louis Rams defeated the Saints 26-10.

NFL RESULTS

| | | | |
|--------------|----|-------------|---------|
| Baltimore | 31 | Pittsburgh | 17 |
| Carolina | 24 | Tampa Bay | 0 |
| Green Bay | 28 | Chicago | 0 |
| Indianapolis | 13 | Buffalo | 10 (OT) |
| Jacksonville | 30 | Cincinnati | 27 |
| Minnesota | 41 | Arizona | 0 |
| Philadelphia | 24 | NY Giants | 17 |
| Denver | 34 | Seattle | 7 |
| St. Louis | 26 | New Orleans | 10 |
| Houston | 35 | NY Jets | 10 |
| Oakland | 17 | Miami | 7 |
| New England | 45 | San Diego | 7 |

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| <p>TODAY AT</p> <p>CINEMA TEL: 634144</p> <p>PHILADELPHIA</p> <p>PHILADELPHIA 1</p> <p>TWISTER</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30</p> <p>PHILADELPHIA 2</p> <p>PAMELA ANDERSON...in</p> <p>BARB WIRE</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30</p> | <p>CINEMA TEL: 699238</p> <p>PLAZA</p> <p>SEAN CONNERY...in</p> <p>THE ROCK</p> <p>(IN DOLBY STEREO)</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30</p> | <p>CINEMA TEL: 677420</p> <p>CONCORD</p> <p>CONCORD "1"</p> <p>INDEPENDENCE DAY</p> <p>(IN DOLBY STEREO)</p> <p>Shows: 12:30, 3:30, 6:00, 8:15, 10:45</p> <p>CONCORD "2"</p> <p>Robert Redford & Michelle Pfeiffer ... in</p> <p>UP CLOSE & PERSONAL</p> <p>Shows: 3:30, 6:15, 8:30, 10:30</p> | <p>Ammoun Theatre & Cinema TEL: 618274 - 618275</p> <p>Today presents Zawad Weld Awad theatre group in the play entitled</p> <p>Five-Star Government</p> <p>Starring comedians:</p> <p>Mahmoud Saimah & Hussein Tubeishat</p> <p>play starts 8:30 p.m</p> | <p>Nabil & Hisham's Theatre TEL: 625155</p> <p>PRESENTS</p> <p>THE SATIRICAL COMEDY</p> <p>Arab Human Rights</p> <p>at 8:30 p.m.</p> <p>Theatre is closed Friday, Saturday & Sunday</p> <p>For reservation please call 625155 - 640155</p> |
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Utah beats Seattle in rematch of western finals

SEATTLE (R) — Seattle SuperSonics guard Hersey Hawkins scored the NBA's 7,000,000th point in the league's marquee game Sunday, but three teams in action elsewhere had a lot of trouble putting the ball in the hoop.

The NBA runner-up Sonics went down to defeat when Karl Malone scored 30 points and grabbed 13 rebounds as the Utah Jazz scored a 96-90 road victory in a rematch of last year's Western Conference finals.

John Stockton added 12 assists, but only six points for Utah (12-2), which won its 10th straight.

Utah's only two losses came in a home-and-home series against the Houston Rockets, who lead them by two games in the Midwest Division.

"This is one game. We've had some big games with Chicago, Dallas, Denver and the Sonics," said Utah coach Jerry Sloan. "These are the kinds of teams we judge ourselves against. We played hard and took advantage of some key situations, but it's just another win."

"As far as I'm concerned, it's just one game in a season and we came out and executed and did everything we needed to do," said Malone. "We never let the crowd into it. Every time they did something, we answered and kept them out of it."

Malone has led the team in scoring in all but two games and in rebounding in all but five.

Shawn Kemp had 29 points and 12 rebounds and Gary Payton added 19 points for the Pacific Division-leading Sonics (14-4), who had won 13 of their previous 14 games.

"I don't think we played with an urgency or an energy that was respectful of the matchup," said Seattle coach George Karl. "I thought it was a stale game in a big-game situation."

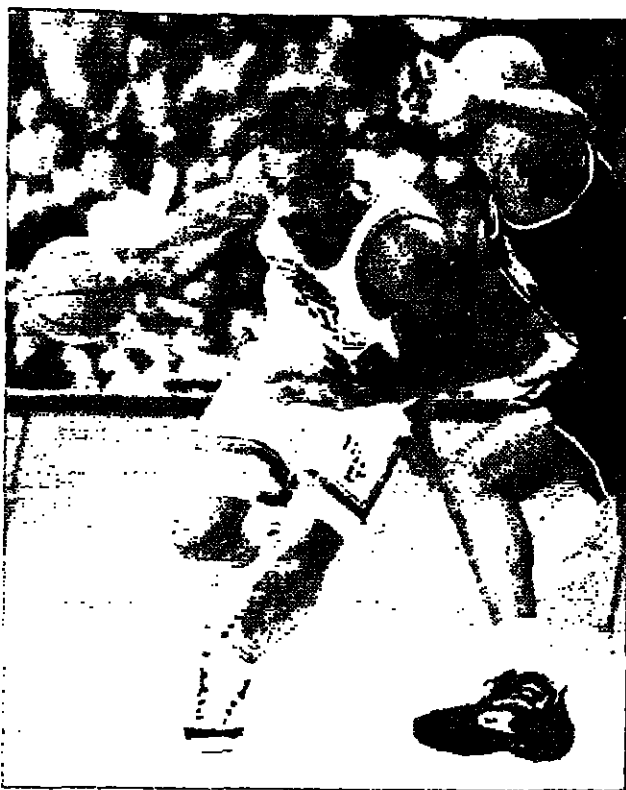
Seattle got to within six points on Kemp's 20-footer late in the fourth quarter, but Shandon Anderson and Malone had two free throws apiece to put the lead back to 95-85 as Utah held on for the victory.

Hawkins scored the NBA's 7 millionth point on a jumper at 7:58 of the fourth quarter, the league said.

Seattle's only other loss to a Western Conference team this season came against the Jazz in a 99-91 decision on opening night.

In Detroit, Grant Hill scored nine of his 23 points during a 21-2 run in the first quarter and Grant Long added 15 points as the Pistons whipped the Sacramento Kings 95-66.

Detroit, whose largest lead was 35, bounced back from its second home loss of the season and won for the seventh time in nine



Detroit Pistons' Grant Hill (L) drives to the hoop past Sacramento Kings' Mitch Richmond during first half action in their NBA game at the Palace (Reuters photo)

Olajuwon hospitalised again

HOUSTON (R) — Houston Rockets centre Hakeem Olajuwon was admitted to a hospital Sunday after suffering an irregular heartbeat for the second time in less than two weeks, team doctors said.

Olajuwon complained of the problem during halftime of a Saturday night road game against the Washington Bullets, but played the second half after a team trainer gave him the okay, they said.

A few hours after the game, Olajuwon "felt like his heart was fluttering" and the decision was to return him to Houston for evaluation, team doctor James Muntz said in a news conference.

He was checked into Methodist Hospital and was expected to be there for at least 24 to 48 hours, Muntz said.

Cardiologist Tony Pacifico said that Olajuwon was in good condition, but that his heart was still beating irregularly Sunday night and it was likely doctors would shock the organ back into a normal heartbeat on Monday.

The problem was thought to be neither a threat to his life nor his basketball career, Muntz said. "It's more of a nuisance, not a life-threatening problem."

Olajuwon was pulled from a game at halftime on November 19 and sent to the hospital where he stayed for two days before doctors released him. His heart had to be shocked back into a normal rhythm during that episode, but Muntz said tests showed his heart was in good shape.

Olajuwon, 33, first suffered an irregular heartbeat in 1991 and was forced to miss seven games.

The Nigerian-born U.S. citizen was a member of the U.S. Gold-medal Dream Team in the summer Olympics in Atlanta and led the Rockets to NBA championships in 1994 and 1995. He is an 11-time all-star who won the league's Most Valuable Player Award in 1994.

games. The 66 points was the second-lowest output in Kings history, by seven points. Sacramento fell to 1-4 on its six-game road trip and has lost three straight by an average of 20 points per game.

The Pistons made just over 50 percent of their shots (34-for-67), while the Kings shot 28 per cent (24-for-85).

At Los Angeles, Shaquille O'Neal had 24 points and 16 rebounds and tied a career-high with eight assists as the Lakers held the Denver Nuggets to a franchise-low nine points in the first quarter before holding on for a 104-96 victory.

The Warriors set a franchise record for fewest points and field goals (24) allowed. Portland shot only 30 percent (24-of-79) from the field.

Nick Van Exel added 24 points for the Lakers, who closed the first quarter on a 10-1 run for a 23-9 lead. Derek Fisher's three-point shot capped a 20-1 run bridging the first and second quarters as the Lakers took a commanding 33-9 advantage with 6:38 to go in the first half.

At Golden State, Latrell Sprewell scored 28 points and B.J. Armstrong added seven of his 18 in a second-quarter run as the Warriors pounded the Portland Trail Blazers 98-70.

Chris Mullin added 11 for Golden State, which salvaged the back end of a home-and-home series against Portland.

The Warriors set a franchise record for fewest points and field goals (24) allowed. Portland shot only 30 percent (24-of-79) from the field.

Tom Stiansen gets his first World Cup slalom win

BRECKENRIDGE, Colorado (R) — Tom Stiansen of Norway surprised no one more than himself when he won the men's World Cup slalom Sunday.

"If you had told me at the start of the year that I would win a race, I wouldn't have believed you," Stiansen said after posting a time of 1:45.49 to defeat Thomas Sykora of Austria.

Bidding for his second victory of the new season, Sykora made a strong rally from fifth place after the first run, but fell just short in 1:45.65. Thomas Stangassinger of Austria claimed third in 1:45.89. Sykora and Stangassinger finished 1-2 in the season opener a week earlier.

Kjetil Andre Aamodt of Norway used a fourth-place finish to take the overall world cup lead over Michael Von Gruenigen of Switzerland, 231-207. Michael Tritcher finished fifth, giving Austria three of the first five.

Stiansen, a 26-year-old in his sixth World Cup season, never had finished higher than eighth in a slalom race. He held that place in the season's first race at Park City, Utah, duplicating a last-season effort at sestriere, Italy. The reason for his surge seems plain enough.

"I was on the downhill team and didn't train slalom for three years," Stiansen explained. "I began to change my focus last year and today I got the results."

Stiansen said his skin carved particularly well on an extremely firm course iced down with 800,000 litres of water before Saturday's giant slalom race. With no rut to trouble him, he had no difficulty vaulting from the 22nd start position on the first run to take the lead.

Then, with Sykora's challenge already on the scoreboard, he calmly powered his way through the final gates to claim the victory.

"I never had been a leader after the first round, but I wasn't as nervous as I thought I'd be," he said.

Both Austrians expressed delight at their second trip to the podium in two weeks.

"I'm in the best shape of my life," Sykora said. "Maybe I'll continue to ski well and win the overall slalom title."

Since Sykora has been on the podium in each of the last three World Cup slalom races, his ambition seems very real.

Austria might have fared even better in this race if Christian Mayer, runner-up after the first run, hadn't crashed on the second. Fredrik Nyberg of Sweden, winner of the Saturday giant slalom, also left the course on the second run.

Volatile mix of nations vie for 11th Asia Cup

DUBAI (AP) — Asia's top soccer-playing nations, a volatile mix with bitter disputes off the field, will vie for leadership of Asian soccer in the 11th Asia Cup starting Wednesday.

Soldiers in olive drab are patrolling the soccer stadiums from behind vehicle-mounted guns ahead of the tournament in this oil-financed oasis of skyscrapers and manicured gardens carved from the desert.

Peter Vellapan, the chief of the Asian Football Confederation, said a record 12 countries are taking part, up from eight in the previous finals.

The tournament cannot avoid political overtones. Organizers are upbeat about the event — it is the "right time that Asian soccer makes its presence felt," says Vellapan — but fret privately about international tensions creating problems at the games.

Among the participants are Iraq and Iran, which fought an eight-year war during the 1980s. Also included are Kuwait, invaded by Iraq in 1990, and Saudi Arabia, the base for the massive U.S.-led force that drove

the Iraqi invaders out in 1991. Another participant is Syria.

Japan, which won the last Asia Cup in 1992, and South Korea are co-hosting the World Cup 2002 but still harbour deep resentments dating to Japan's colonial rule of South Korea from 1910 to 1945.

China, meanwhile, is the world's most populous nation with 1.3 billion people and seeks to emerge as a superpower.

The 34-match tournament also has Asia's up-and-coming soccer-playing nation, Uzbekistan, which won the gold medal at the Hiroshima Asian Games in 1994.

The other nations in the tournament are the host United Arab Emirates, Indonesia and Thailand. The final will be played Dec. 21.

The runup to the Asian Cup final saw 58 matches being played in the 10 qualification groups, producing 259 goals at an average of 4.5 per match. Iranian striker Ali Daei was the top scorer in the qualifiers, hitting 10 goals in 12 matches.

Jordan takes 2nd place in Cyprus Taekwondo Championship

By a Jordan Times Staff Reporter

other competing teams.

Jordan's results came as follows:

58-64 kg: Mohammad Ali Ruz (gold medal)

67-83 kg: Hussein Tahel (gold medal)

54-58 kg: Mohammad Qawasmi (silver medal)

50 kg and under: Mohammad Falah Hamed (silver medal)

64-70 kg: Mohammad Shdeifat (silver medal)

83 kg and under: Mohammad Kafawin (silver medal)

50-54 kg: Ali Asmar (bronze medal)

70-76 kg: Mohammad Abdul Aziz (bronze medal)

AMMAN — Jordan's delegations to the Cyprus International Taekwondo Championship return home tomorrow after taking second place in the competition in which five countries took part.

The Kingdom's team took two gold, four silver and two bronze medals and dedicated their achievement to His Majesty King Hussein and His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan, president of the higher council of martial arts.

Hosts Cyprus came in first place, followed by Jordan and Lebanon. Yugoslavia and Slovenia were the two

EUROPEAN SOCCER

All change at the top in three major leagues

LONDON (R) — It was all change at the top in England, France and Germany as Arsenal, Paris Saint-Germain and Bayer Leverkusen respectively seized the lead in their leagues at the weekend.

In Europe's other major first divisions, the status quo was maintained at the top by Italians Vicenza, Spain's Real Madrid and PSV Rijnhoven of the Netherlands.

England's French manager Arsene Wenger praised his team's fighting spirit after they defied the odds to beat Newcastle 2-1 and replace Kevin Keegan's side at the top of the Premier League.

The London side led through Lee Dixon after 11 minutes but were reduced to 10 men for the second successive match when skipper Tony Adams was sent off for grappling with his England team mate Alan Shearer midway through the first half.

Shearer, the world record 15 million pounds Sterling (\$25 million) signing from Blackburn in the northern summer, equalised after 21 minutes.

Arsenal subsequently survived an almost constant bombardment to escape with three points after Wright grabbed what proved to be the winner after an hour.

France's Paris Saint-Germain snatched back the lead from Monaco when they came from behind to beat lowly Caen 3-1 away.

With Brazilian Leonardo inspirational in midfield, PSG scored through Panama's Julio Cesar Dely Valdes, his eighth league goal of the season, and France midfielders Vincent Guerin and Bruno N'Gotty.

Monaco won 1-0 at Montpellier to hold a two-point lead for 24 hours but PSG have now 42 points to Monaco's 41 after 20 matches.

Chadian playmaker Japhet N'Doram missed a twice taken penalty but ended up with a hat-trick as Nantes won 5-1 against 10-man Cannes, who had defender David Jemmal sent off, to become the biggest scorers in the division with 37 goals, one more than Monaco.

Germany's early-season leaders Bayer Leverkusen seized the chance to return to the top with a 4-2 win over Cologne.

Leverkusen and second-placed Bayern Munich are separated only by goal difference before next weekend's final round of matches ahead of the winter break.

Bayern won an important psychological battle with a 1-1 draw at VfB Stuttgart, the most impressive team in the Bundesliga in the first half of the season.

Stuttgart needed an 80th-minute goal from Dutch captain Frank Verlaar to save the match after Bayern took an early lead on a seventh-minute penalty by German international midfielder Mario Basler.

Italy's Vicenza coach Francesco Guidolin watched his side draw 1-1 to restore their historic one-point lead over Internazionale at the top of Serie A — and then warned about the threat of relegation.

"Our aim at the start of the season was to avoid relegation from the first division," said Guidolin, whose team is setting the pace in Serie A for the first time in their 94-year history.

"Only when that aim is achieved can we start thinking about other objectives like the championship."

Alessandro Iannuzzi, a close season buy from Lazio, moved Vicenza closer to first division salvation when a 10th minute shot from the edge of the penalty area put his side 1-0 up against Perugia.

Carminio Gaudieri equalised in the 33rd, but the away point was enough to give unfancied Vicenza 21 points from 11 matches, one more than Inter, who had briefly drawn level after drawing 2-2 at home to Cagliari.

Spain's Real Madrid ensured they would start next weekend's clash with arch-rivals Barcelona as leaders by beating Sporting Gijon 1-0 away.

With 35 points from 15 games, Real go four clear of Barcelona.

A solitary goal from Frenchman Corentin Martins ensured Deportivo Coruna three points from their game at Sevilla and with it second place.

Netherlands' Ajax Amsterdam's miserable league season continued when the defending champions were held 1-1 after Groningen's Dean Gorre scored a late equaliser.

Ajax dropped to sixth in the first division, 13 points behind leaders PSV Eindhoven, who beat NEC Nijmegen 4-1 and have 42 points from 18 matches.

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Jordan hopes to finalise changes to trade accord during Sharansky visit

Broadening list of tariff-free goods and cut in duties key topic for discussions tomorrow

By P.Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan hopes to reach agreement with Israel on broadening the base of products it could export to the Jewish state and the Palestinian territories during the visit tomorrow of Israeli Trade Minister Natan Sharansky, Information Minister Marwan Muasher said Monday.

The visit of Mr. Sharansky, his first to Jordan after assuming office in the government of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu in June, is a follow-up to talks he held with his Jordanian counterpart Ali Abul Ragheb in Cairo in mid-November.

During the Cairo meeting, which came on the fringes of the third Middle East and North Africa economic conference held in the Egyptian capital, Israel agreed in principle to expand a list of products that enjoy preferential status while traded between Jordan and Israel.

Mr. Sharansky also agreed to consider a Jordanian request for a reduction of customs duties levied on certain Jordanian products while entering Israel.

Dr. Muasher confirmed on Monday that Israel had agreed to replace the so-called back-to-back arrangement for the transport of Jordanian goods into Israel by a "door-to-door" system.

Under the new arrangement, Jordanian trucks could carry products directly to their destinations in Israel. Until now, the trucks had to unload the cargo at the Jordanian side of the border for reloading onto Israeli trucks on the other side.

Israel has now accepted that the inspection of the goods and vehicles be conducted by Jordanian authorities without cumbersome Israeli "security inspections" that lead to higher costs and delays, officials have said.

The arrangement is expected to be formalised during the Abul Ragheb-Sharansky talks tomorrow.

Minister of Transport Nasser Lawzi is also expected to meet with Mr. Sharansky since the trade accord is closely linked with another bilateral agreement with the Jewish state on transport.

"We are very much interested in really activating the trade agreement we have signed with Israel" as called for in the October 1994 peace treaty between the two countries, said Dr. Muasher. "We would be seeking to broaden the list of (tariff-free) products that Jordan can export to Israel and also to lower the (customs duties and other taxes) on other products," he told a weekly press briefing.

The information minister said Jordan would also be discussing aspects of an economic cooperation agreement that Israel signed with the Palestine Liberation Organisation after the two sides entered the interim autonomy accords in September 1993.

The economic cooperation agreement, signed in Paris in April 1994, curtails the freedom of the Palestinians in external trade by defining the products that they could import from non-Israeli sources as well as setting quotas for such imports.

"We have always felt that the (Paris) agreement was discriminatory against Jordanian products," said Dr. Muasher.

He said that the issue had been raised with Israeli officials and that the response had been positive.

"They (Israel) have agreed to increase the quota (of Jordanian products that could be exported to the Palestinian territories) by two and a half times," said the information minister.

Israeli Interior Minister Dan Meridor said two weeks ago that his country had agreed to consider some changes to the Paris accord following the Jordanian intervention as well as direct approaches from the Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

But he attributed the delay in incorporating the changes to the accord to what he said was Palestinian failure to turn up for meetings on the subject. PNA officials refuted the charge and asserted that the changes that Israel was ready to make were cosmetic.

"It is clear that Israel has little intention to relax its grip on the West Bank and Gaza Strip as a captive market for Israeli products," said a senior PNA official.

But Israeli officials counter the argument by asserting that Israeli exports to the Palestinian market is not an important element of the country's trade. However, unofficial figures show that the West Bank and Gaza Strip account for more than 10 per cent of Israel's total exports.

Dr. Muasher said on Monday that with the new door-to-door transport arrangement and the sought-for changes in the Jordanian-Israeli trade accord as well as the Israeli-Palestinian agreement, Jordan expects a "significant increase" in its trade with Israel as well as the Palestinian territories.

UAE marks silver jubilee with call for Arab solidarity

Sheikh Zayed urges Iran to seek peaceful solution to dispute over 3 Gulf islands

DUBAI (Agencies) — The United Arab Emirates (UAE) on Monday celebrated its emergence over 25 years from a string of poor desert sheikhdoms into a key oil producer with a pledge to work for Arab solidarity to preserve stability in a troubled region.

President Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan, in a speech at a silver jubilee parade in the capital Abu Dhabi, said he hoped the views of Arab states would get closer and that differing positions would converge and unite.

"Whatever efforts may be needed to achieve it, the restoration of Arab solidarity is the best way to ensure the stability of our states and the prosperity of our peoples," the 78-year-old president said.

Sheikh Zayed returned recently from the neck surgery in the United States and his speech was read by an assistant.

The UAE was formed in 1971 when Britain unilaterally withdrew its military protection from the Trucial States — Abu Dhabi, Ajman, Dubai, Fujairah, Ras Al Khaimah, Sharjah and Umm Al Quwain — which had subsisted on fishing, pearl-diving and trade.

Sheikh Zayed, who had been made ruler of Abu Dhabi five years earlier when his brother was deposed, became president and guided the UAE's rapid development as a modern state funded by an abundant flow of oil discovered in 1960.

The UAE is now one of the world's wealthiest countries with oil revenue of \$9 billion a year and sufficient crude in the ground to last a century.

Sheikh Zayed said advances made by Gulf Arab states had given much benefit to their citizens and the UAE looked forward to closer cooperation strengthening common security, stability and prosperity.

"The United Arab Emirates, God willing, will continue as a generous and bountiful state, like a well whose waters never deplete," he said.

The climate for investment and the attractions the UAE offered within a stable and secure society gave it the opportunity of taking its place among states which, with sound economics and



United Arab Emirates President and ruler of Abu Dhabi Sheikh Zayed Ben Sultan Al Nahayan (right) presents the medal of independence to the former Saudi armed forces chief of staff, Prince Khaled Ben Sultan Ben Abdul Aziz during a meeting in Abu Dhabi on Monday (Reuters photo)

continued growth, were able to offer a proper life for their citizens, he said.

Sheikh Zayed renewed a call for an Iranian response to a UAE appeal for a peaceful solution to their dispute over three islands located near oil export routes at the mouth of the Gulf.

He said the UAE would continue to work to regain Greater and Lesser Tunb and Abu Musa islands, disputed since 1992 when the UAE accused Iran of occupying them.

"We now renew, therefore, our call to the Islamic Republic of Iran to respond positively to our initiatives and appeals to reach a peaceful solution to the dispute over the three islands, either through serious bilateral negotiations, or through an acceptance of the referral of the issue to the International Court of Justice," he said.

"From our side, we have shown our goodwill towards Iran in more than one fashion, and on more than one occasion, sufficiently so for them to decide upon their own options, based upon our historic links, our friendly relations, good neighbourliness and the mutual interests that exist between us."

Iran says its sovereignty over the islands is not negotiable and described an Arab summit stand earlier this year backing the UAE's claim as likely to increase tension in the region.

The sparsely-populated

UAE is nervous over the intentions of its much larger neighbour across the Gulf and watching closely as the Islamic republic performs war games in the waterway.

Sheikh Zayed said the UAE had emphasised its desire that Iraq should remain united and that it should preserve its territorial integrity, enjoying non-interference in its internal affairs.

The UAE is one of several Gulf states which criticised recent U.S. action against Iraq and has called for lifting United Nations sanctions to end the suffering of the Iraqi people.

Sheikh Zayed said the UAE was following a policy based on non-interference in others' internal affairs, respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity of other countries and resolving disputes through peaceful means and in accordance with international law. "On this basis, the UAE will continue to work for regaining its occupied islands of Abu Musa, Greater Tunb and Lesser Tunb, which are an inseparable part of our country," he said.

The UAE and Iran have been locked in the territorial dispute since the emirates' establishment on Dec. 2, 1971, when Iranian troops occupied the three islands just after Britain ended its colonial presence in the region.

Several rounds of negotia



Reptile-lover in suicide bid

BOCHUM, Germany (AFP) — A German reptile-fancier was seriously ill Monday, 48 hours after attempting to commit suicide by allowing a venomous South African snake to bite him, police said. The 28-year-old man told a friend by telephone what he had done, and the friend alerted police, who found him unconscious on the floor of his Bochum apartment in Germany's Ruhr Valley. The friend, also a reptile fancier, identified the snake as a naja-nivea whose fast-acting poison paralyses the respiratory system. Serum to counter its effect was rushed to the Bochum hospital by police helicopter from a Dusseldorf zoo. Police said the snake in question was being cared for.

'Dead man' returns to his wake

MANILA (AFP) — A man who went missing for a month went berserk when he returned to his Manila home and discovered his wife and neighbours holding a funeral wake for him, complete with a corpse they assumed to be his, police said Monday. An enraged and upset Isidro Caturra terrified the already frightened mourners on Saturday, breaking everything in the house except for the casket bearing the unidentified corpse. His wife Ligaya, 33, told police that she had claimed the body of a man found floating in the Pasig River as that of her missing husband citing striking similarities, down to the bedsores on his back, police officer Eliseo Victorio told reporters.

Thief's trove lost to time found

NEW YORK (AFP) — A trove of stolen wallets and purses missing for nearly 40 years has seen the light of day once again as builders accidentally uncovered a thief's time capsule in a historic theatre here. Builders demolishing the old Apollo Theatre off the city's famous Times Square stumbled a week ago upon more than a dozen wallets and pocketbooks stashed in an air duct, according to the New York Times. The wallets — minus the cash they once held — were laden with faded photographs, identification papers, and other materials indicating they had been stuffed in the duct between 1959 and at least 1961. "The further back I crawled, the older they got, from the 1960s to the 1950s," said Bill Barron, a supervising foreman for the general contractor of the project. Attempts to track down the owners of the stolen items have so far only turned up two people who are still living, the paper reported.

Diana rejects Mirror report

LONDON (AFP) — Britain's Princess Diana publicly gave her blessing to her eldest son Prince William's passion for hunting, reacting through her spokeswoman, the former wife of Prince Charles, denied a Sunday Mirror newspaper claim that she had fallen out with the 14-year-old over blood sports. "Both the Princess and Prince William have a very close relationship and she respects that he has interests in every arena and would not question them," the spokeswoman said. In a front-page report, the Sunday Mirror said Princess Diana had forbidden Prince William from raising the subject of hunting in her presence.

Pavarotti to retire

WASHINGTON (AFP) — Luciano Pavarotti's opera career will last until 2001 when the 61-year-old tenor plans to call it quits. "I debuted in 1961... a 40-year career is all a tenor dares to do," Pavarotti told Il Messaggero. And after that? Pavarotti will give singing lessons and hopes to launch an international horse racing event.

Jordan and Iraq review trade and transport ahead of oil-for-food deal

Kabariti meets Saleh; Dabbas, Awad to visit Baghdad

By P.Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — Jordan and Iraq have discussed trade between the two countries ahead of the implementation of Baghdad's oil-for-food agreement with the United Nations, and two Jordanian ministers will visit Baghdad soon, Information Minister Marwan Muasher said Monday.

Dr. Muasher also said that while Iraq was expected to give preferential status for Jordanian products and services under the oil-for-food agreement the main criteria for securing business with Iraq would be quality and competitive prices.

There could be no presumption that Jordan would be given preference by Iraq as sources for its imports, the information minister told a weekly press briefing.

"We need to offer competitive prices and quality for our products and services," he said. "There is no political element that would determine who would get what share" from the expected Iraqi orders for food and medicine in the wake of the oil-for-food accord.

That is one of the reasons that prompted the government to reduce port fees and handling charges at Aqaba, he said.

Dr. Muasher also reaffirmed that the Iraq-U.N. deal, under which Baghdad will export oil worth \$2 billion in six months and receive food and medicine in return, had no official bearing on the official trade protocol between Jordan and its eastern neighbour.

The protocol is tied to Iraqi oil exports at concessionary terms to Jordan under an exemption granted by

the United Nations, which imposed sweeping trade sanctions against Iraq following the August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait.

Jordan reduced the volume of the protocol to \$220 million — \$150 million in goods and \$70 million in services — in 1996 from \$400 million in 1995 (No split-up for goods and services was available for the 1995 figure).

The Kingdom said the cut-back was prompted when it felt it could no longer afford to pay from its own reserves the foreign exchange needed for raw materials to be used in goods for export to Iraq and hence the reduction.

According to Jordanian figures, Baghdad now owes the Kingdom more than \$1.2 billion, accumulated since 1990 when Iraqi oil exports — the country's mainstay revenue-earner — was banned under the U.N. sanctions.

Officials also defend the reduction in the volume of the protocol by pointing out that there was little Jordanian input into the goods that were being sent to Iraq.

Dr. Muasher said the volume of the official trade protocol would not be increased in 1997 and that the agreement was expected to remain largely unchanged.

But, he added, the government was encouraging the private sector to increase their exports to Iraq outside the protocol.

He said Prime Minister Abdul Karim Kabariti met Iraqi Trade Minister Mohammad Mehdi Saleh on Sunday and reviewed the status of Jordanian-Iraqi trade and agreed to hold a second meeting on Dec. 8.

Mr. Saleh reaffirmed his country's readiness to use Aqaba for its imports of food and medicine under the deal with the U.N., Dr. Muasher said.

Iraq will also be using its own Gulf port of Umm Qasr, which can handle vessels under 25,000 dead-weight tonnes, for part of the imports. Bigger vessels will be calling at Aqaba.

Following the Dec. 8 meeting, Minister of Energy and Mineral Resources Hashem Dabbas and Minister of Finance Marwan Awad are expected to go to Baghdad but no date has been set for the visit, Dr. Muasher said.

The ministers' mission to Baghdad was requested by Jordanian businessmen who visited the Iraqi capital in early November under the aegis of the Amman Chamber of Industry and signed preliminary agreements for exports.

During their Baghdad visit, ministers Dabbas and Awad are also expected to review the annual agreement that governs the Iraqi oil exports to the Kingdom and perhaps renew it for another year, official sources said. Also expected to be on the table are issues related to the Iraqi debt to Jordan.

Dr. Muasher said Jordan had identified four lines of products for exports to Iraq — medicine, detergents, soups and vegetable oil.

However, he noted, the United Nations Sanctions Committee had the final say in allowing goods, whether Jordanian or otherwise, to enter Iraq. Exporters have to secure the prior approval of the panel, which is made up of the 15 members of the Security Council, for every shipment that enters Iraqi territory.

Qatar supports Yemen's bid to join GCC

KUWAIT CITY (Agencies) — Yemen should join the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) while Iraq and Iran should cooperate with the Gulf states in boosting regional security, Qatar's emir said in remarks published Monday.

Sheikh Hamad Ben Khalifa Al Thani's remarks in Kuwait's Al Qabas newspaper came after the London-based Al Hayat newspaper reported that Yemen had made an official request to join the GCC. Qatar is hosting a summit of the GCC — composed of Qatar, Kuwait, Saudi Arabia, Bahrain, the United Arab Emirates and Oman — in Doha from Dec. 7-9.

"I think that it would be in the interests of the Gulf that if there is security cooperation

in the future that it should include Iran and Iraq, and the same goes for Yemen," Sheikh Hamad was quoted as saying.

"(Yemen) should be inside the (Gulf) Cooperation Council in the future, because I think it is difficult to leave Yemen alone in the southern corner," he said. "It must join this council."

Yemen is a small oil producer, but unlike its Gulf neighbours is ranked among the world's poorest countries.

Its relations with other Gulf states, mainly Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, were severely strained during the 1990-1991 Gulf crisis, when Sanaa was seen to side with Baghdad during the seven-month Iraqi occupation of Kuwait.

Qatar has often driven an

independent foreign policy line from other GCC states, including taking a softer line on Iran and Iraq and opening trade relations with Israel.

On Qatar's relations with Israel, the emir said: "It is difficult to cancel these steps at the present time, unless developments occur that give us scope to stop any relation with Israel."

"Now we have frozen the relationship" following the election of the right-wing government under Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu, the emir said.

Sheikh Hamad said relations with his father, Sheikh Khalifa Ben Hamad Al Thani, who he toppled in a bloodless coup in 1995, were also better.

"The situation is good between me and my father.

and I have talked to him more than once, and we consider this a good thing," Sheikh Hamad said.

"I am looking forward to visiting him, God willing, after the summit," the emir said.

Sheikh Khalifa has several residences in Europe and he is believed to be in London now.

Sheikh Hamad seized power in the emirate while his father was vacationing in Europe. Qatar, with about 200,000 citizens, is located atop the world's third-largest reserves of natural gas.

A settlement reached in October between the emir and his ousted father over billion of dollars in missing state funds seems to have paved the way for the reconciliation.

Iraq seriously seeks speedy end to problems with UNSCOM — Sahaf

Baghdad expects normal ties with Gulf soon

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq is seriously working to resolve its outstanding problems with the U.N. particularly over its alleged possession of banned long-range missiles, Foreign Minister Mohammad Al Sahaf said in remarks on Monday.

"We will focus our efforts to close this file (of the missiles) as quickly as possible," Mr. Sahaf was quoted as saying in remarks published in local newspapers.

He also said Iraq was "seriously working" to resolve outstanding issues with the U.N. Special Commission (UNSCOM) disarming it under the 1991 Gulf war ceasefire.

It would make such an effort especially because the number of French ballistic missile experts in UNSCOM, "which is a favourable factor for Iraq," Mr. Sahaf said without elaborating.

France, Russia and China have taken a softer line toward the economic sanctions on Iraq than their British and American counterparts in the five-member U.N. Security Council.

He also said Iraq will soon restore diplomatic relations with some Gulf states that were severed after the Iraqi invasion of Kuwait in 1990.

The remarks suggested that Iraq hopes a U.N.-monitored deal allowing it to export oil to pay for imported food and medicine will lead to an end to the six years of isolation that followed the invasion.

Kuwait and Saudi Arabia remain adamantly opposed to any reconciliation with Iraq as long as Saddam Hussein stays in power.

But the United Arab Emirates (UAE) and Qatar have called for better ties. The UAE may ask other Gulf countries to resume dealings with Iraq during a Gulf Cooperation Council summit this month.

"Diplomatic ties will be resumed with some of the Gulf states in the near future," Mr. Sahaf was quoted as telling Iraq's parliament by Al Thawra newspaper.

He did not say which countries might restore relations.

Mr. Sahaf said UNSCOM's chairman Rolf Ekeus was due in Baghdad on Dec. 8 for talks with the Iraqi authorities on how to tackle remaining problems.

UNSCOM suspects Iraq may be hiding up to 16 missiles with ranges beyond the 150 kilometres maximum Baghdad is allowed to possess or manufacture under

the ceasefire terms. Iraq denies the allegations.

Baghdad last month barred U.N. experts from moving remains of missile engines outside and UNSCOM said Iraq's refusal violated its obligations under the ceasefire that ended the Gulf war when a U.S.-led coalition freed Kuwait from Iraqi occupation.

About 60 engines for long-range missiles that Iraq said it destroyed in 1992 were still in boxes at UNSCOM headquarters in Baghdad ready for shipment abroad. Another 20-25 engines remain buried at two sites near Baghdad.

UNSCOM also says Iraq's latest declarations on past weapons programmes are flawed and inadequate.

A senior UNSCOM official in Baghdad said Iraqis recently admitted the gaps in their previous declarations and promised "to be more exact in the future."

"They have confessed that their figures were not exact enough and have promised to be more correct when supplying new data," Goran Wallen, director of Baghdad ongoing monitoring and verification centre, told Reuters.